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30 YEARS X-MEN® 1963-1993

JR JR + DG

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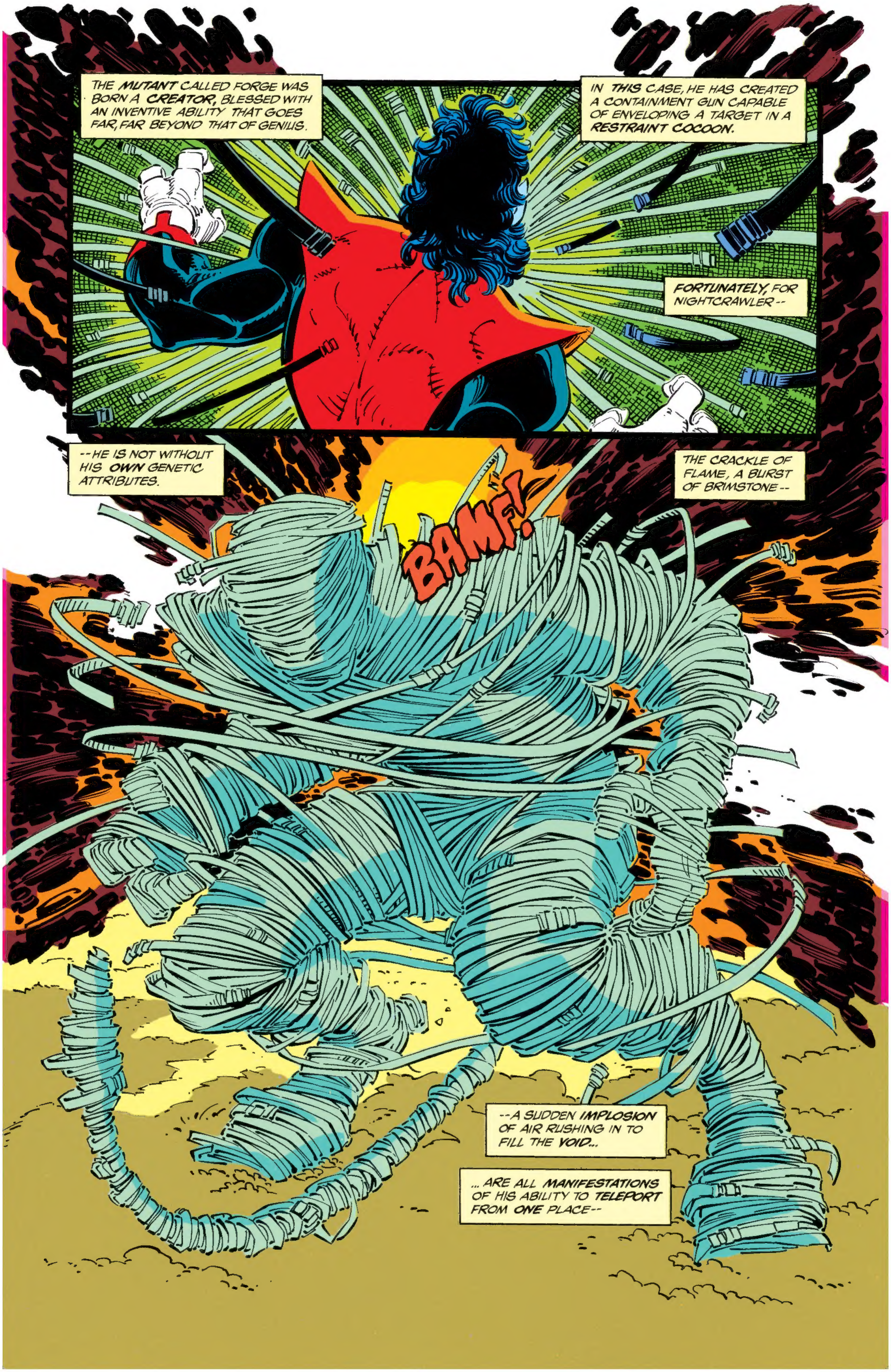
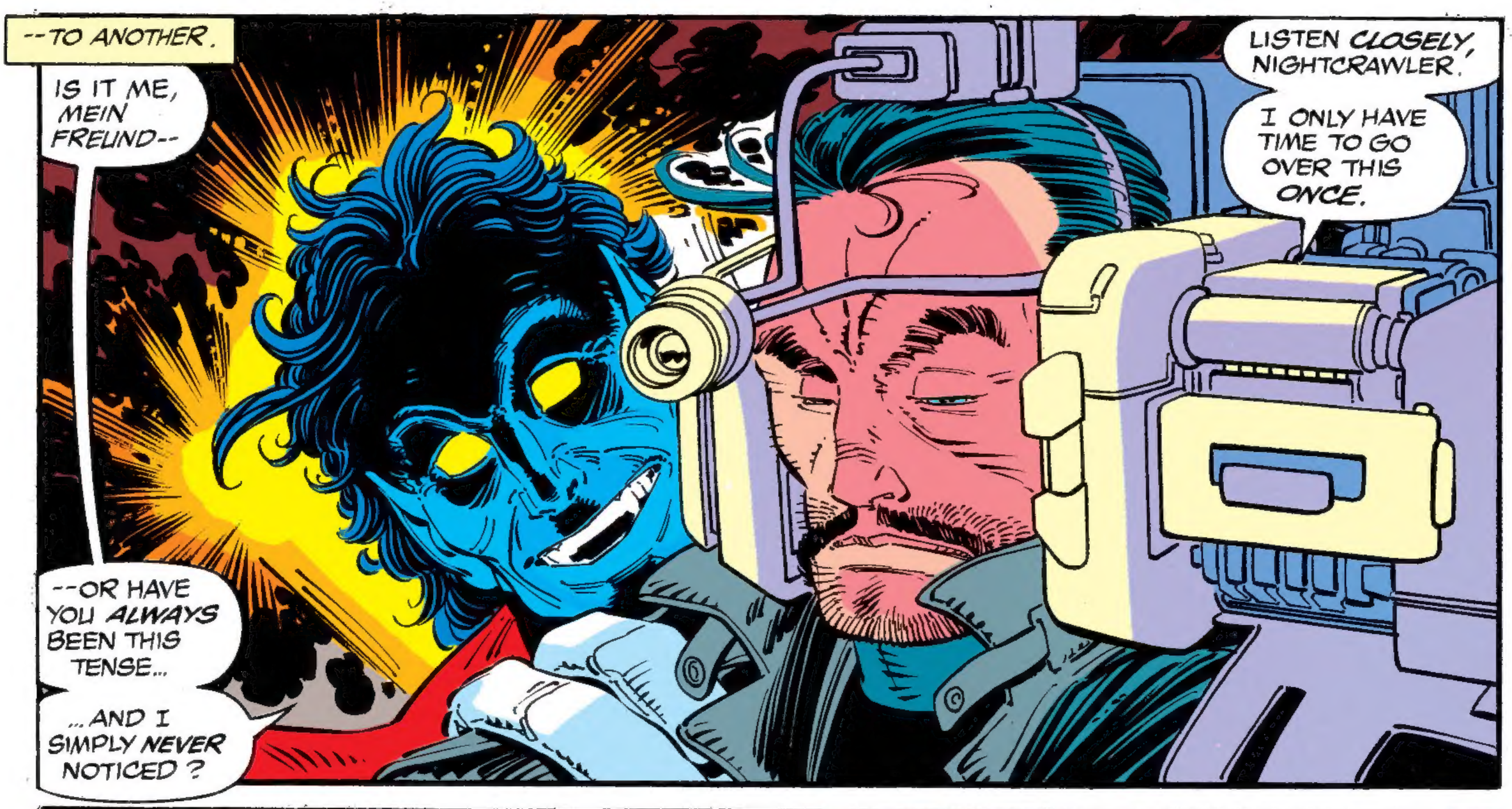
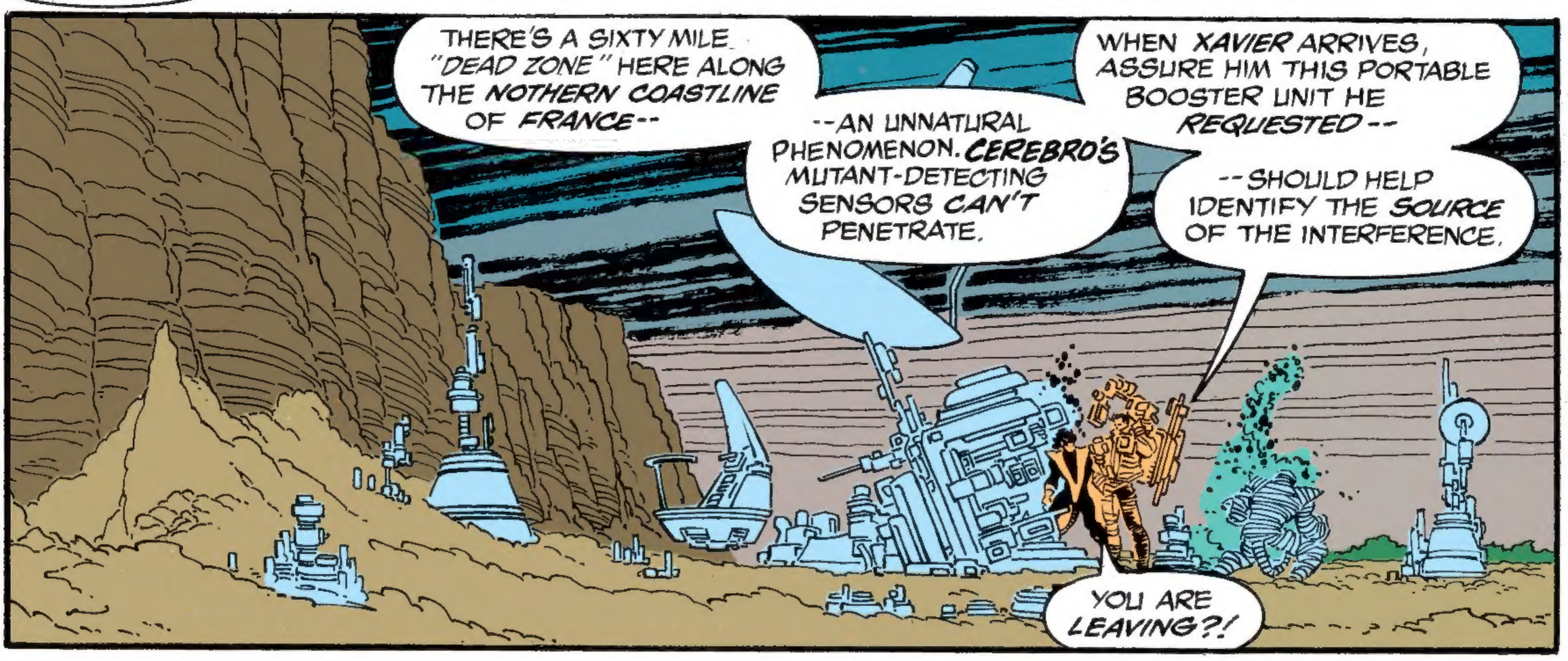
WHATEVER DIRE EMERGENCY AWAITS, AT LEAST I WILL FACE IT IN...
...THE COMPANY OF...
...GOOD...
...FRIENDS?
SAVE US BOTH THE EFFORT...
...AND HOLD THAT POSE UNTIL I'VE COMPLETED THESE FINAL CONFIGURATIONS.
WAS?!
CAUTION IS ADMIRABLE, FORGE--
--BUT REST ASSURED IT IS ME, NIGHTCRAWLER!
EASILY SAID.
FWAM!
NOT QUITE AS EASILY PROVEN.

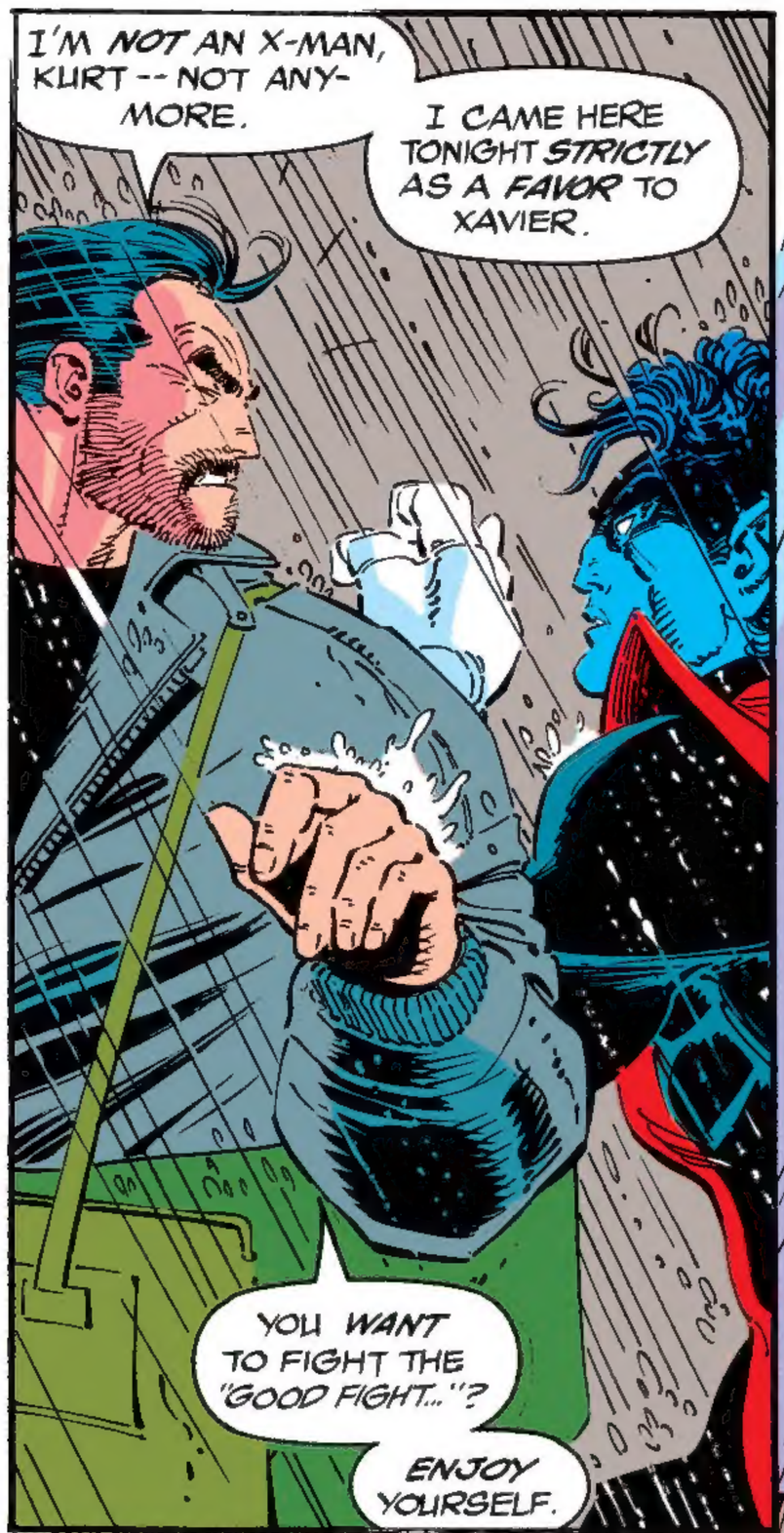

THE MUTANT CALLED FORGE WAS BORN A CREATOR, BLESSED WITH AN INVENTIVE ABILITY THAT GOES FAR, FAR BEYOND THAT OF GENIUS.
IN THIS CASE, HE HAS CREATED A CONTAINMENT GUN CAPABLE OF ENVELOPING A TARGET IN A RESTRAINT COCOON.
FORTUNATELY, FOR NIGHTCRAWLER--
--HE IS NOT WITHOUT HIS OWN GENETIC ATTRIBUTES.
THE CRACKLE OF FLAME, A BURST OF BRIMSTONE--
BAMF!
--A SUDDEN IMPLOSION OF AIR RUSHING IN TO FILL THE VOID...
... ARE ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF HIS ABILITY TO TELEPORT FROM ONE PLACE--

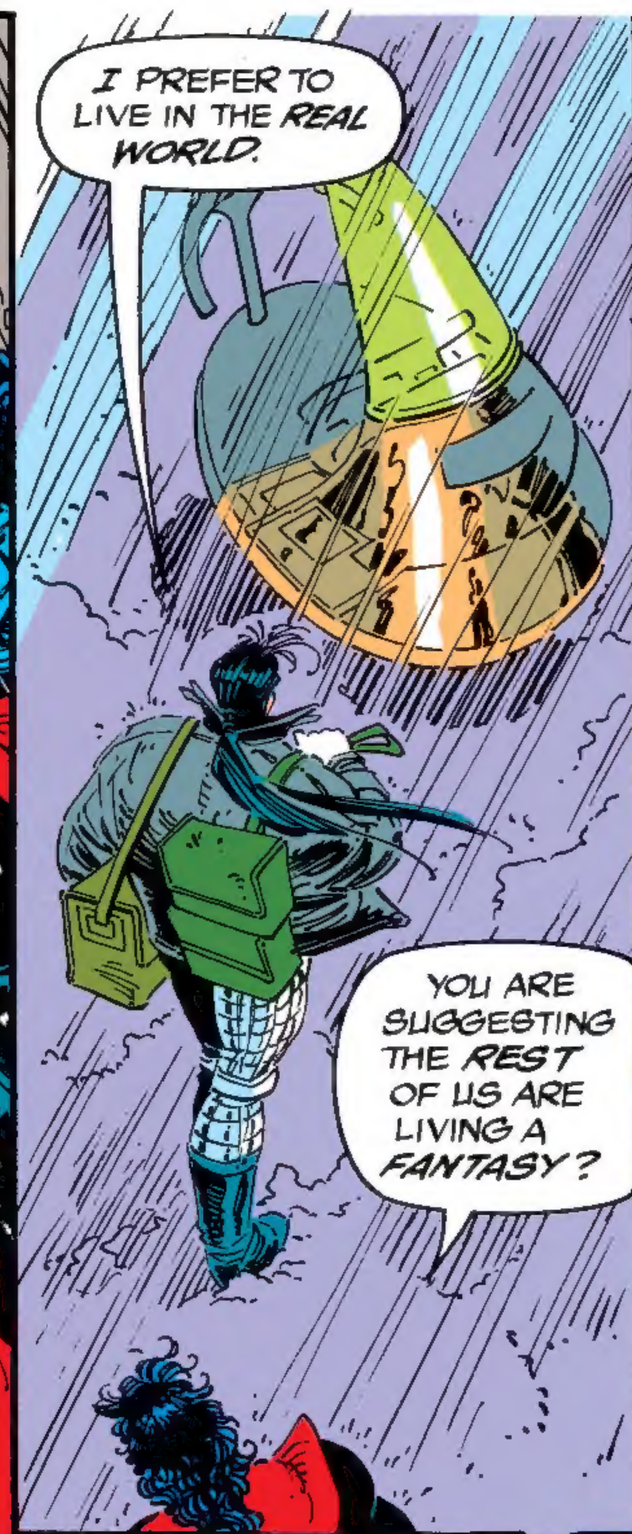

--TO ANOTHER.
IS IT ME, MEIN FREUND--
--OR HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN THIS TENSE...
...AND I SIMPLY NEVER NOTICED ?
LISTEN CLOSELY, NIGHTCRAWLER.
I ONLY HAVE TIME TO GO OVER THIS ONCE.

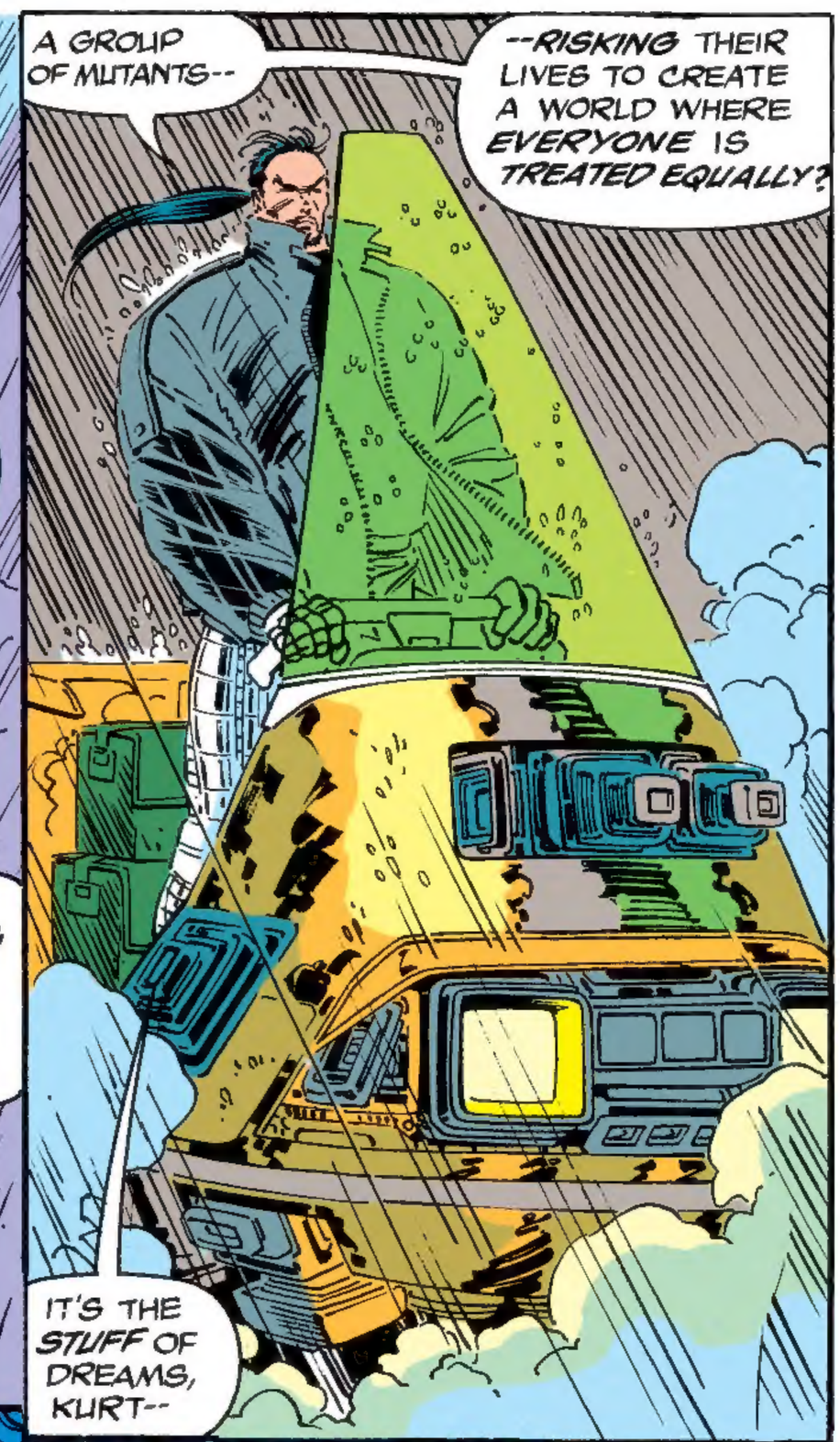

THERE'S A SIXTY MILE "DEAD ZONE" HERE ALONG THE NOTHERN COASTLINE OF FRANCE--
--AN UNNATURAL PHENOMENON. CEREBRO'S MUTANT-DETECTING SENSORS CAN'T PENETRATE.
WHEN XAVIER ARRIVES, ASSURE HIM THIS PORTABLE BOOSTER UNIT HE REQUESTED--
--SHOULD HELP IDENTIFY THE SOURCE OF THE INTERFERENCE.
YOU ARE LEAVING?!

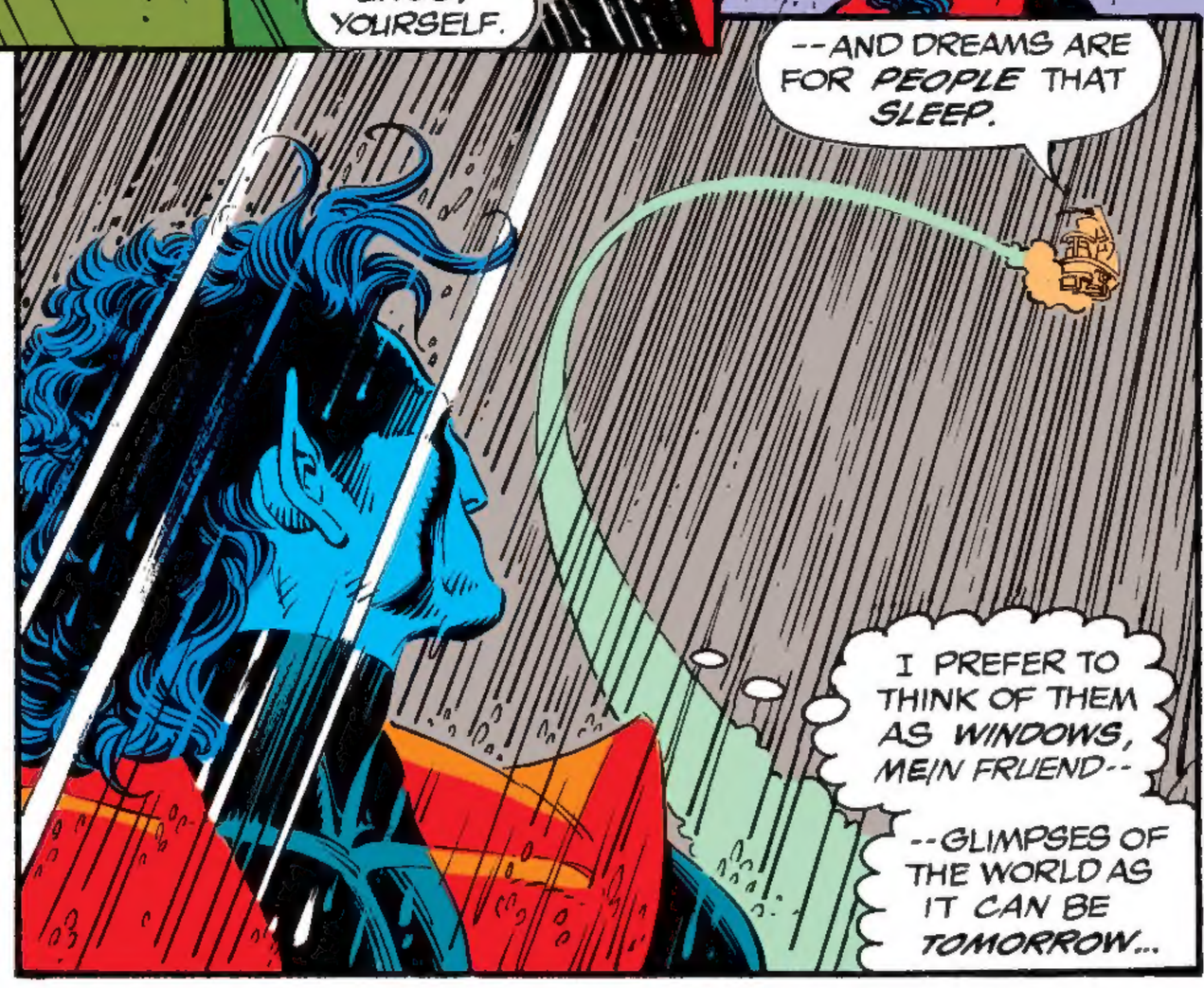
ANY TECHNOLOGY CAPABLE OF HIDING MUTANTS IS PROBABLY AS ADEPT AT LOCATING THEM.
THE FEWER MUTANTS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA--

--THE LESS CHANCE YOU'LL BE DETECTED.
AND WHAT OF IT? THIS WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST TIME YOU AND I HAVE FACED--


I'M NOT AN X-MAN, KURT -- NOT ANYMORE.
I CAME HERE TONIGHT STRICTLY AS A FAVOR TO XAVIER.
YOU WANT TO FIGHT THE "GOOD FIGHT..."?
ENJOY YOURSELF.

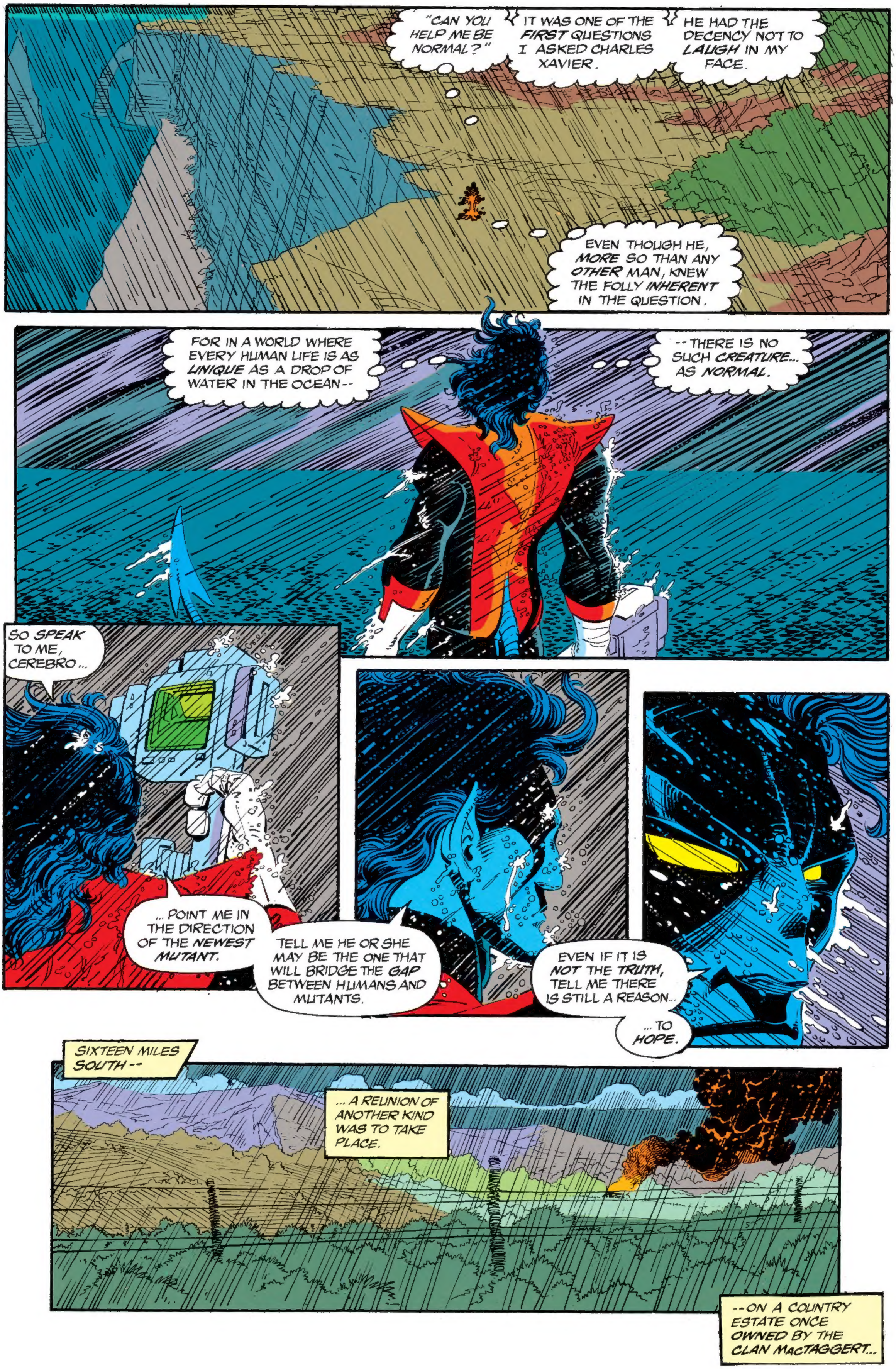

I PREFER TO LIVE IN THE REAL WORLD.
YOU ARE SUGGESTING THE REST OF US ARE LIVING A FANTASY?

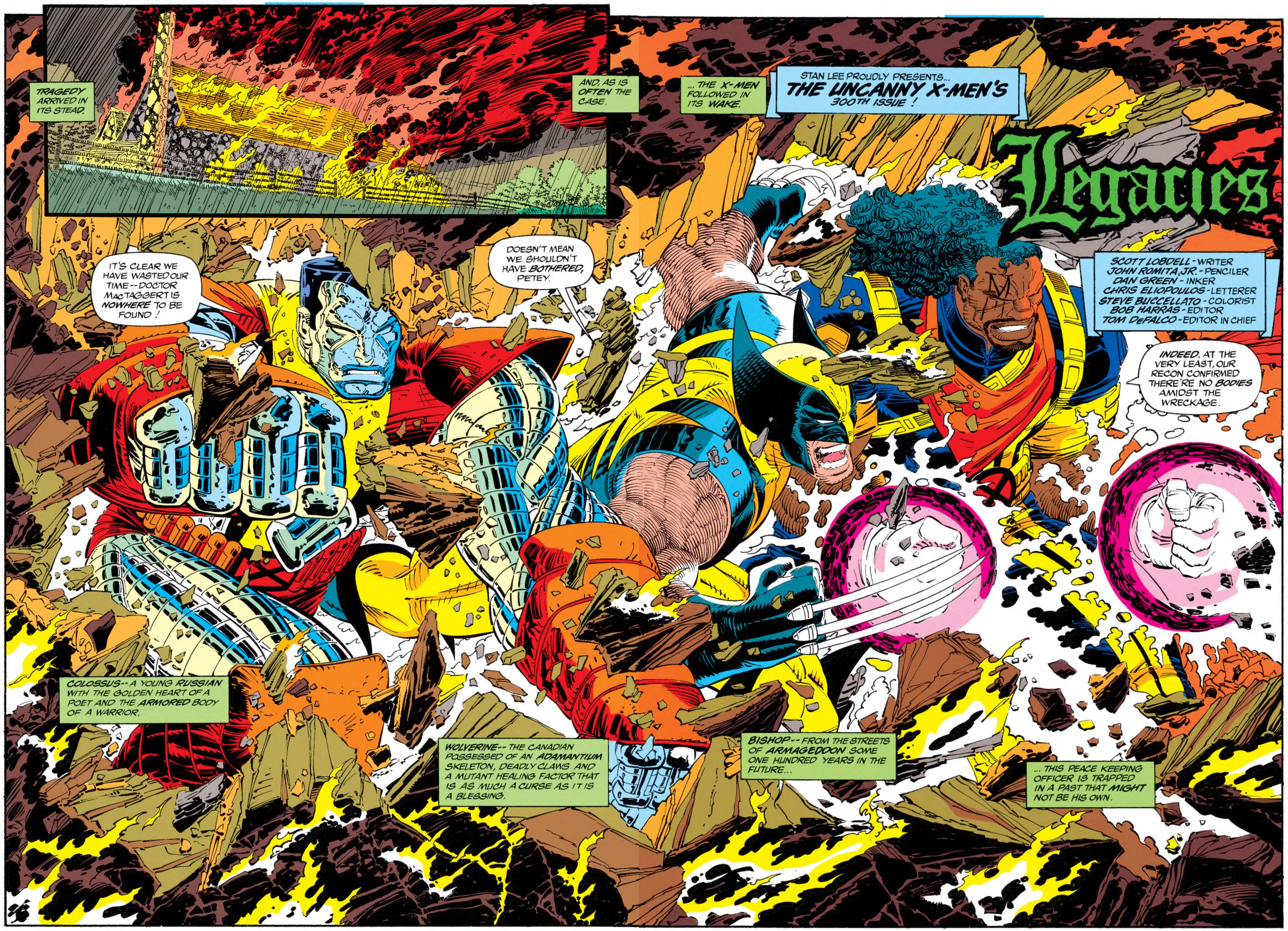

A GROUP OF MUTANTS--
--RISKING THEIR LIVES TO CREATE A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE IS TREATED EQUALLY?
IT'S THE STUFF OF DREAMS, KURT--

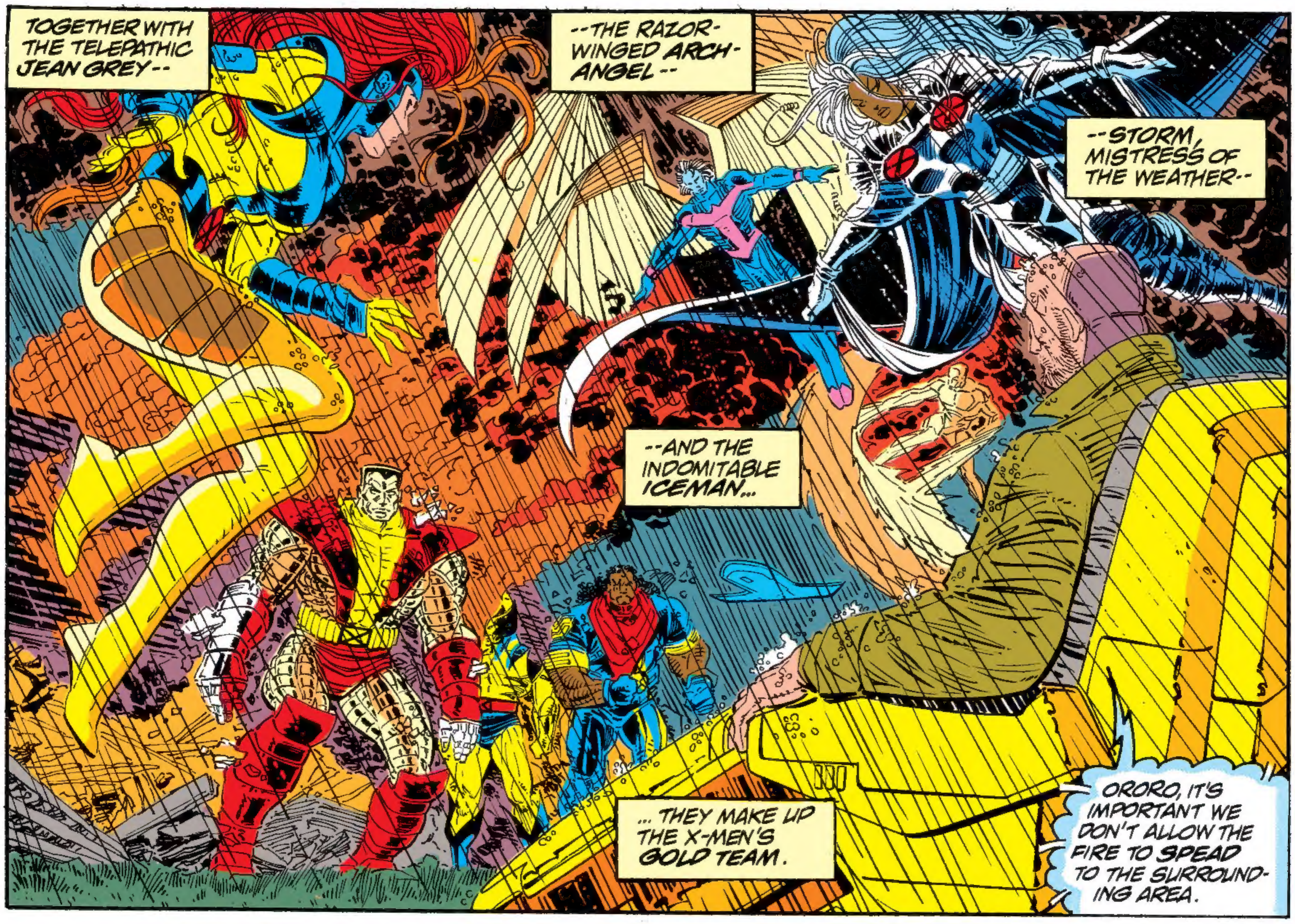

--AND DREAMS ARE FOR PEOPLE THAT SLEEP.
I PREFER TO THINK OF THEM AS WINDOWS, MEIN FRIEND--
--GLIMPSES OF THE WORLD AS IT CAN BE TOMORROW...

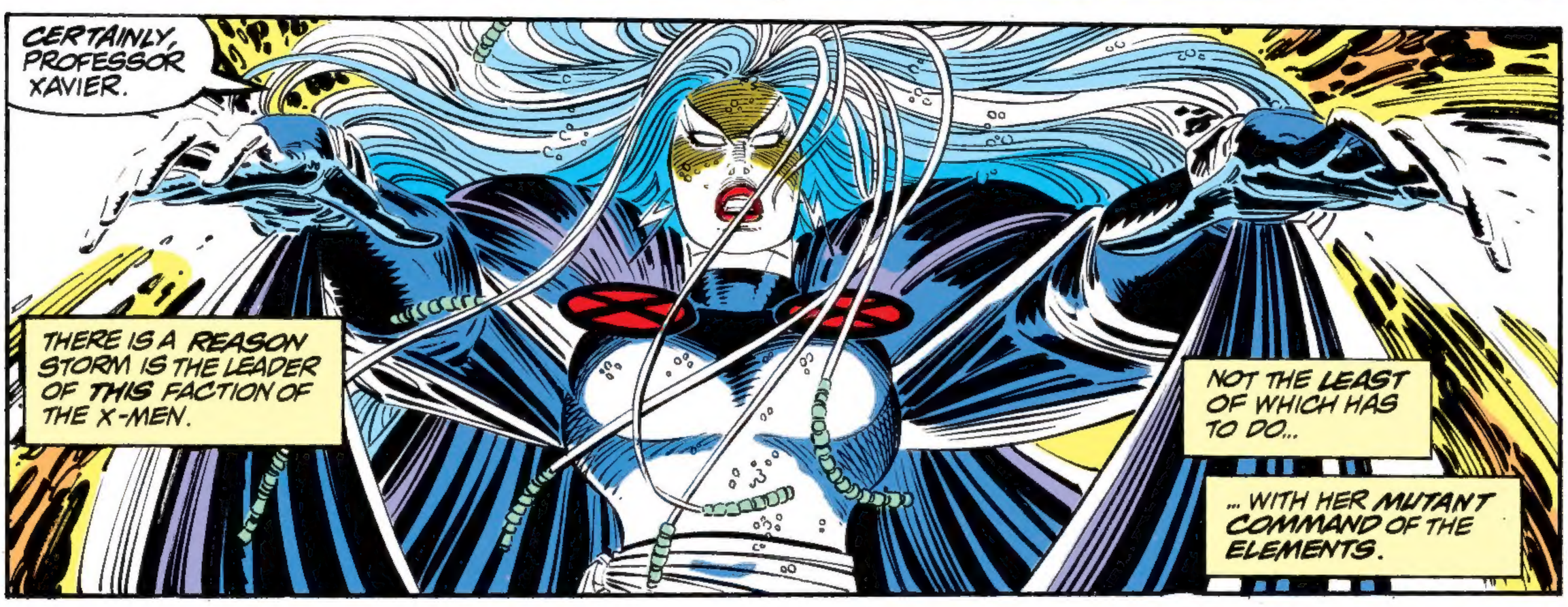
... INSTEAD OF THE WAY IT IS TODAY.

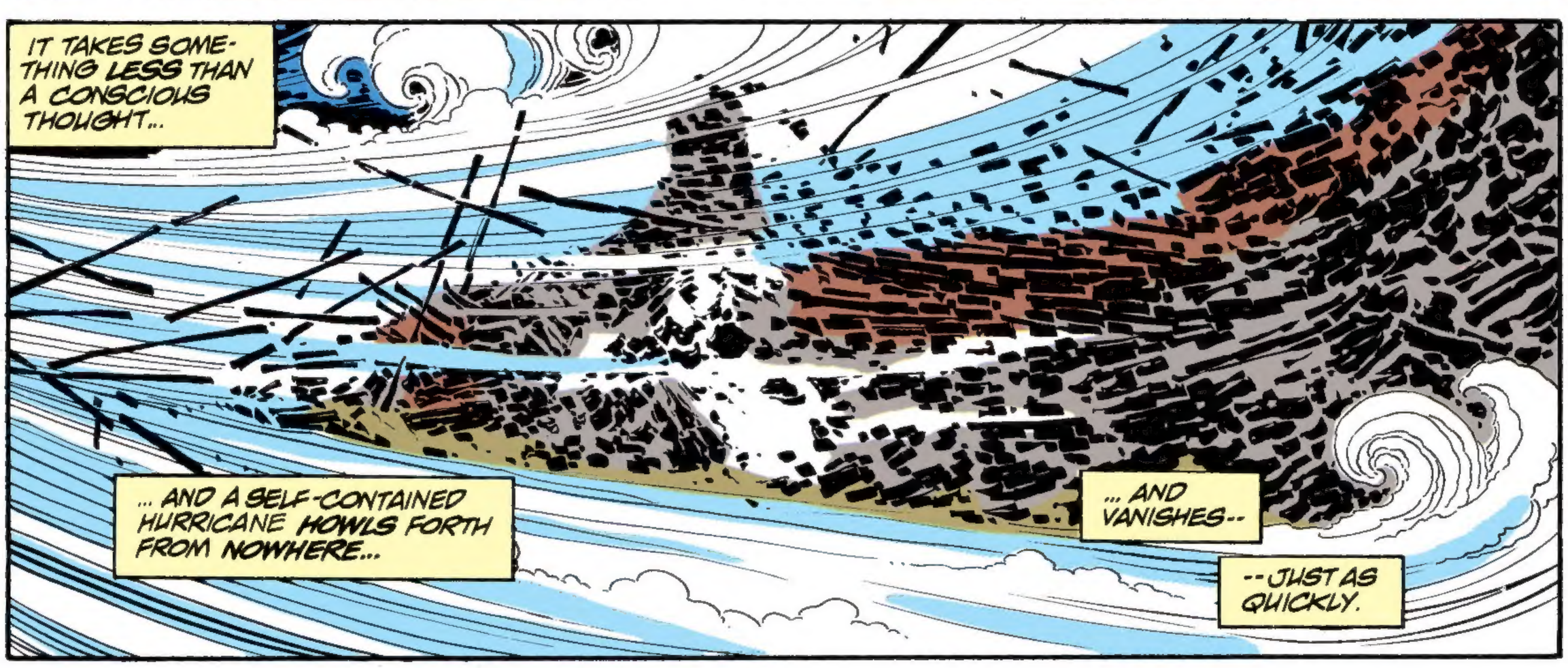
WHICH DOES NOT MEAN WE DO NOT MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR REALITY.
IF WE DID NOT, THE X-MEN WOULD NEVER HAVE BEGAT EXCALIBUR...
...THE NEW MUTANTS-- FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE-- NEVER WOULD HAVE EVOLVED INTO X-FORCE...
...AND X-FACTOR WOULD NOT HAVE ASSUMED THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES THAT ONCE BELONGED TO FREEDOM FORCE.
ONE MIGHT ARGUE THE WORD "MUTANT" IS SYNONOMOUS WITH "CHANGE."
BAMF

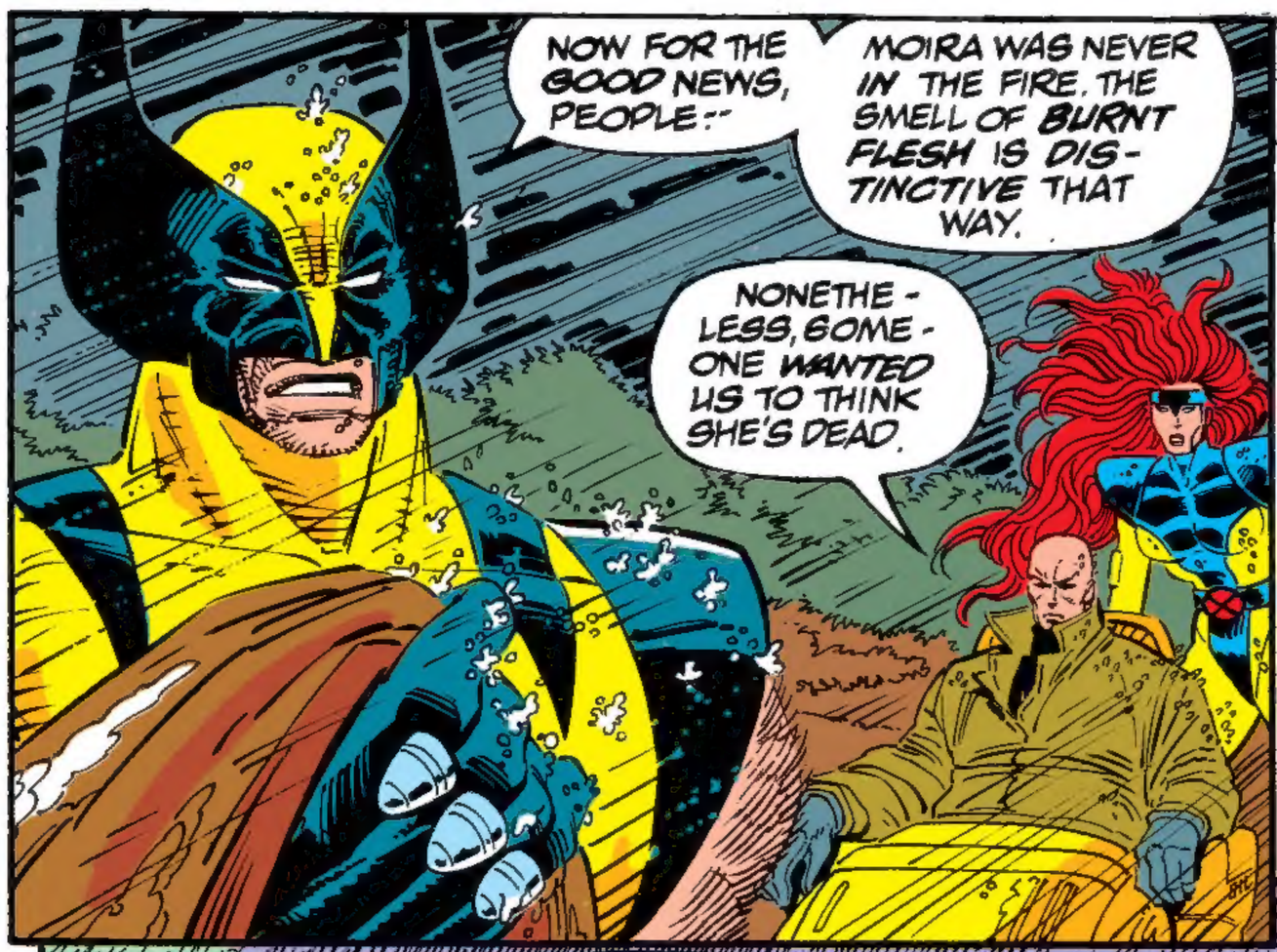

"CAN YOU HELP ME BE NORMAL?"
IT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST QUESTIONS I ASKED CHARLES XAVIER.
HE HAD THE DECENCY NOT TO LAUGH IN MY FACE.
EVEN THOUGH HE, MORE SO THAN ANY OTHER MAN, KNEW THE FOLLY INHERENT IN THE QUESTION.
FOR IN A WORLD WHERE EVERY HUMAN LIFE IS AS UNIQUE AS A DROP OF WATER IN THE OCEAN--
--THERE IS NO SUCH CREATURE... AS NORMAL.
SO SPEAK TO ME, CEREBRO...
... POINT ME IN THE DIRECTION OF THE NEWEST MUTANT.
TELL ME HE OR SHE MAY BE THE ONE THAT WILL BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN HUMANS AND MUTANTS.
EVEN IF IT IS NOT THE TRUTH, TELL ME THERE IS STILL A REASON...
... TO HOPE.
SIXTEEN MILES SOUTH--
... A REUNION OF ANOTHER KIND WAS TO TAKE PLACE.
--ON A COUNTRY ESTATE ONCE OWNED BY THE CLAN MACTAGGERT...

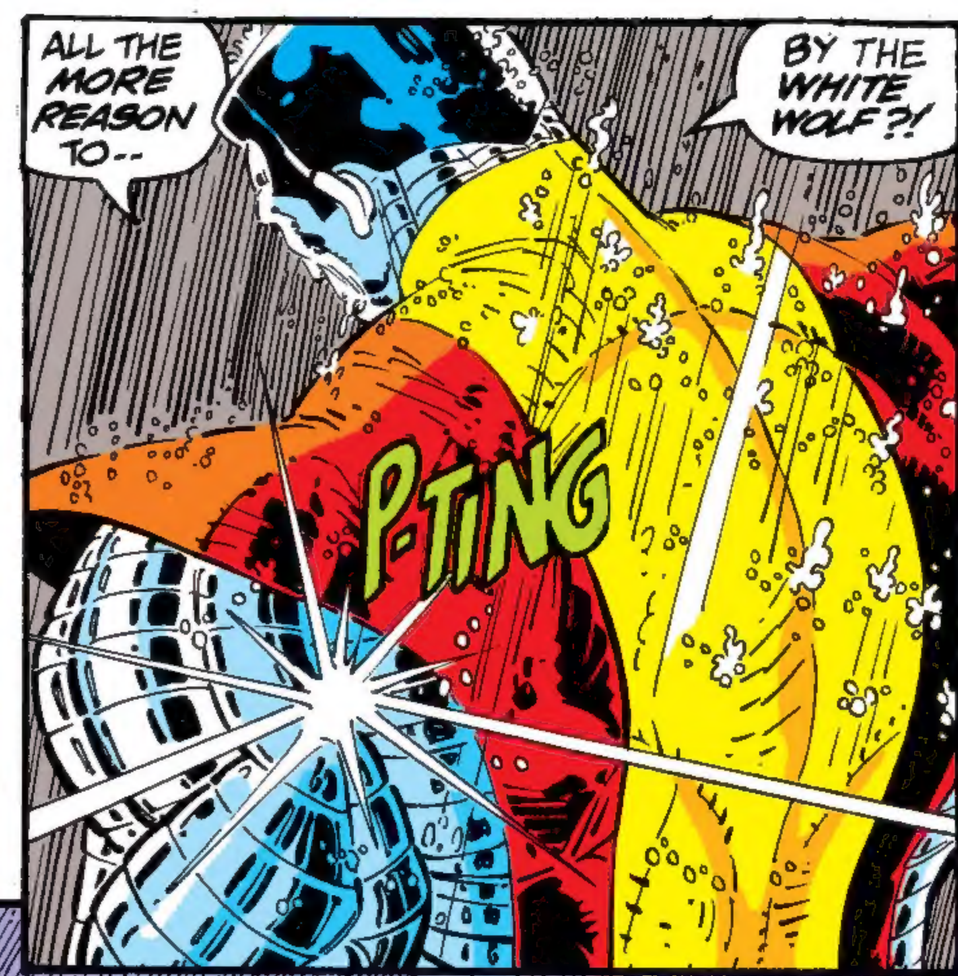

TRAGEDY ARRIVED IN ITS STEAD.
AND, AS IS OFTEN THE CASE.
... THE X-MEN FOLLOWED IN ITS WAKE.
STAN LEE PROUDLY PRESENTS... THE UNCANNY X-MEN'S 300TH ISSUE !
Legacies
SCOTT LOBDELL - WRITER
JOHN ROMITA, JR. - PENCILER
DAN GREEN - INKER
CHRIS ELIOPOULOS - LETTERER
STEVE BUCCELLATO - COLORIST
BOB HARRAS - EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO - EDITOR IN CHIEF
IT'S CLEAR WE HAVE WASTED OUR TIME -- DOCTOR MACTAGGERT IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND !
DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULDN'T HAVE BOTHERED, PETEY.
INDEED. AT THE VERY LEAST, OUR RECON CONFIRMED THERE'RE NO BODIES AMIDST THE WRECKAGE.
COLOSSUS -- A YOUNG RUSSIAN WITH THE GOLDEN HEART OF A POET AND THE ARMORED BODY OF A WARRIOR.
WOLVERINE -- THE CANADIAN POSSESSED OF AN ADAMANTIUM SKELETON, DEADLY CLAWS AND A MUTANT HEALING FACTOR THAT IS AS MUCH A CURSE AS IT IS A BLESSING.
BISHOP -- FROM THE STREETS OF ARMAGEDDON SOME ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN THE FUTURE...
... THIS PEACE KEEPING OFFICER IS TRAPPED IN A PAST THAT MIGHT NOT BE HIS OWN.

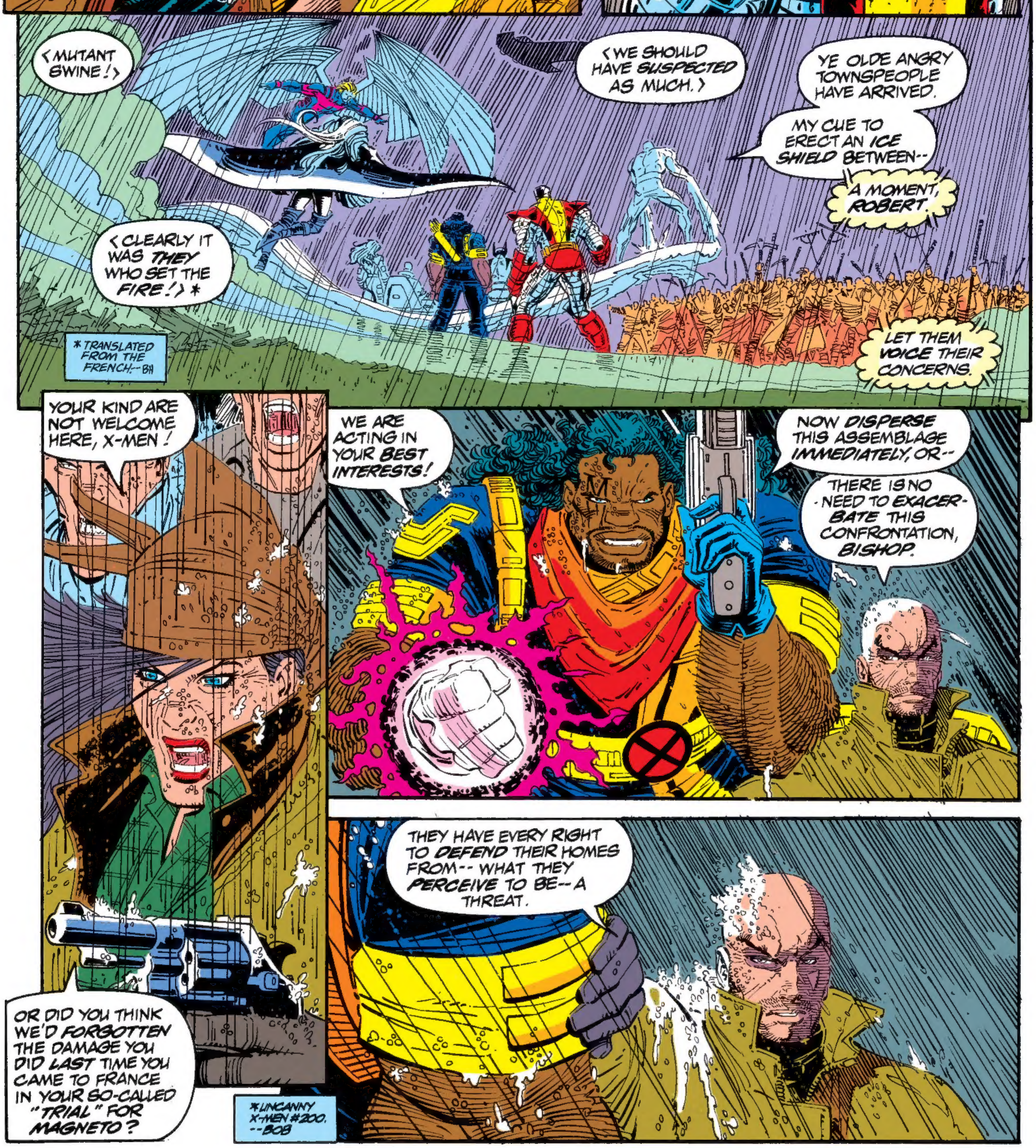

TOGETHER WITH THE TELEPATHIC JEAN GREY--
--THE RAZOR-WINGED ARCH-ANGEL--
--STORM, MISTRESS OF THE WEATHER--
--AND THE INDOMITABLE ICEMAN...
... THEY MAKE UP THE X-MEN'S GOLD TEAM.
ORORO, IT'S IMPORTANT WE DON'T ALLOW THE FIRE TO SPEAD TO THE SURROUND-ING AREA.

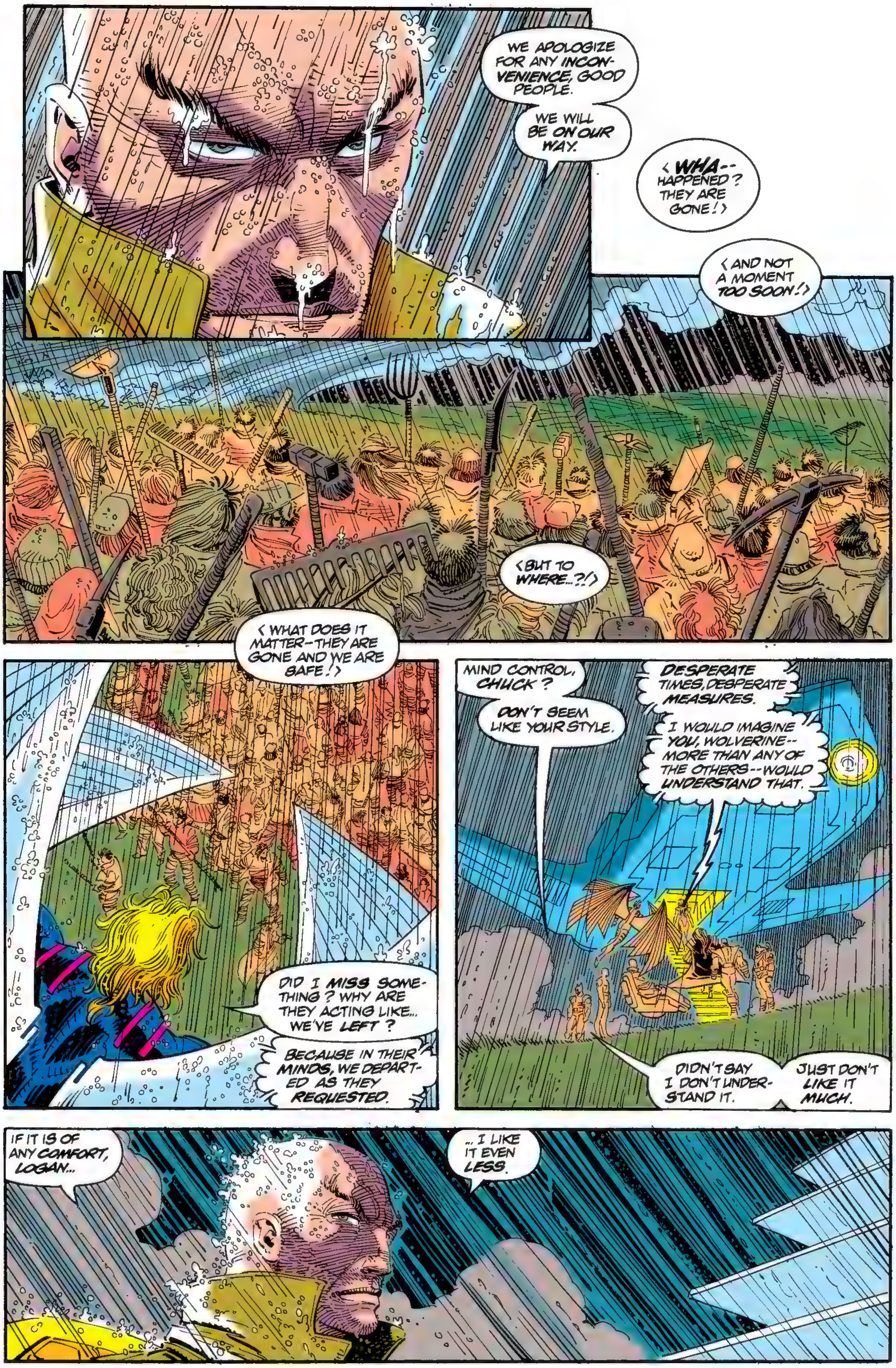

CERTAINLY, PROFESSOR XAVIER.
THERE IS A REASON STORM IS THE LEADER OF THIS FACTION OF THE X-MEN.
NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH HAS TO DO...
... WITH HER MUTANT COMMAND OF THE ELEMENTS.


IT TAKES SOME-THING LESS THAN A CONSCIOUS THOUGHT...
... AND A SELF-CONTAINED HURRICANE HOWLS FORTH FROM NOWHERE...
... AND VANISHES--
--JUST AS QUICKLY.

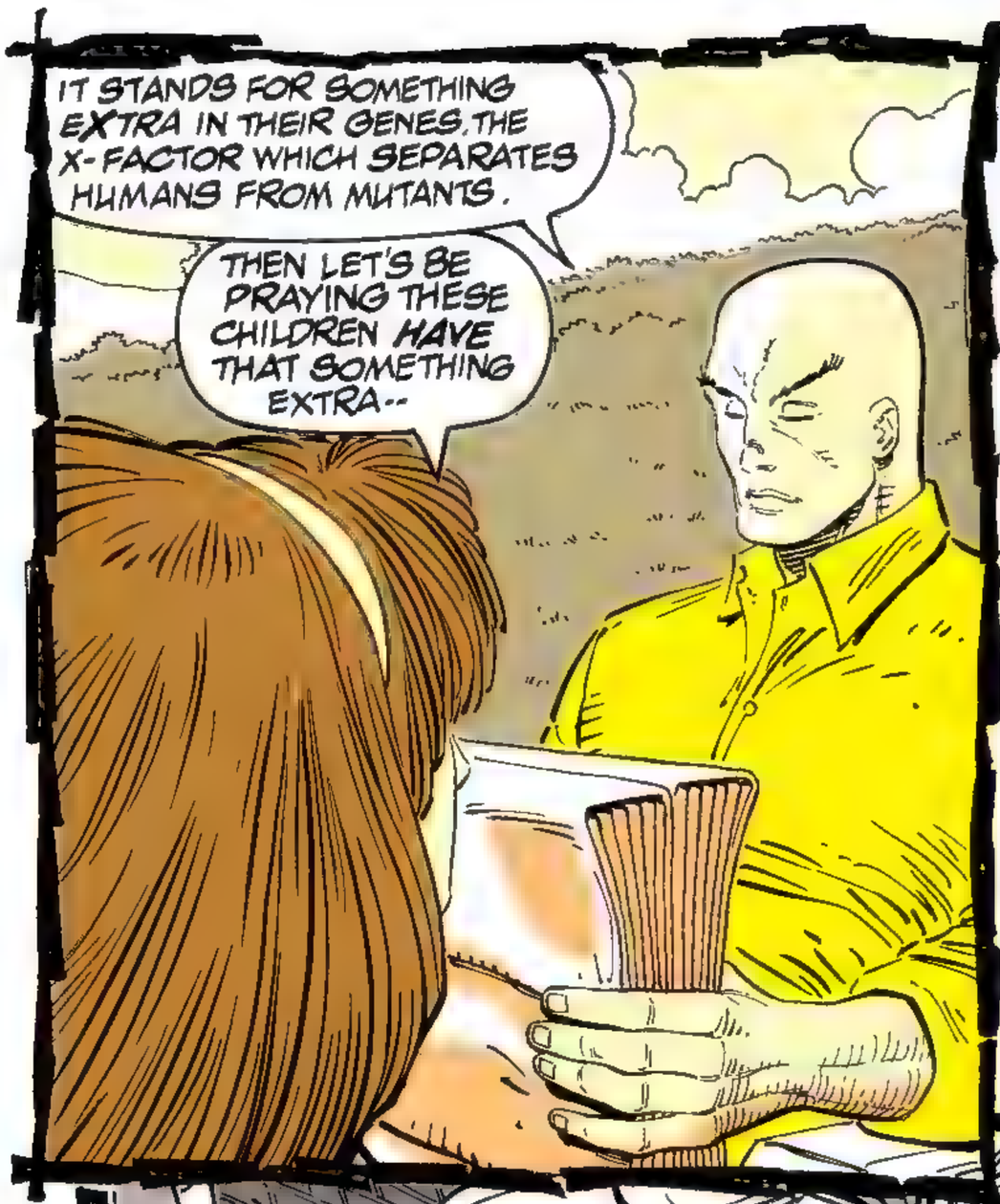

NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS, PEOPLE--
MOIRA WAS NEVER IN THE FIRE. THE SMELL OF BURNT FLESH IS DISTINCTIVE THAT WAY.
NONETHELESS, SOMEONE WANTED US TO THINK SHE'S DEAD.

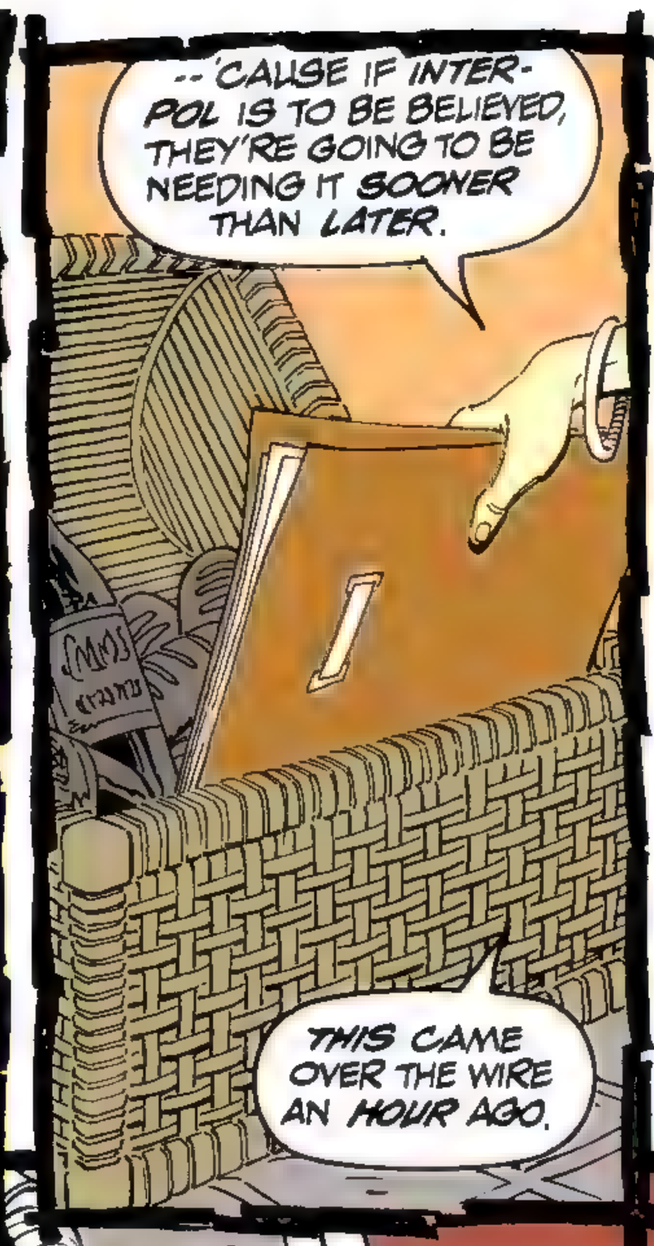

ALL THE MORE REASON TO--
BY THE WHITE WOLF?!
P-TING


<MUTANT SWINE!>
<WE SHOULD HAVE SUSPECTED AS MUCH.>
YE OLDE ANGRY TOWNSPEOPLE HAVE ARRIVED.
MY CUE TO ERECT AN ICE SHIELD BETWEEN--
A MOMENT, ROBERT.
<CLEARLY IT WAS THEY WHO SET THE FIRE!> *
* TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.--BH
LET THEM VOICE THEIR CONCERNS.
YOUR KIND ARE NOT WELCOME HERE, X-MEN!
WE ARE ACTING IN YOUR BEST INTERESTS!
NOW DISPERSE THIS ASSEMBLAGE IMMEDIATELY, OR--
THERE IS NO NEED TO EXACERBATE THIS CONFRONTATION, BISHOP.
THEY HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO DEFEND THEIR HOMES FROM-- WHAT THEY PERCEIVE TO BE--A THREAT.
OR DID YOU THINK WE'D FORGOTTEN THE DAMAGE YOU DID LAST TIME YOU CAME TO FRANCE IN YOUR SO-CALLED "TRIAL" FOR MAGNETO?
* UNCANNY X-MEN #200. --BOB

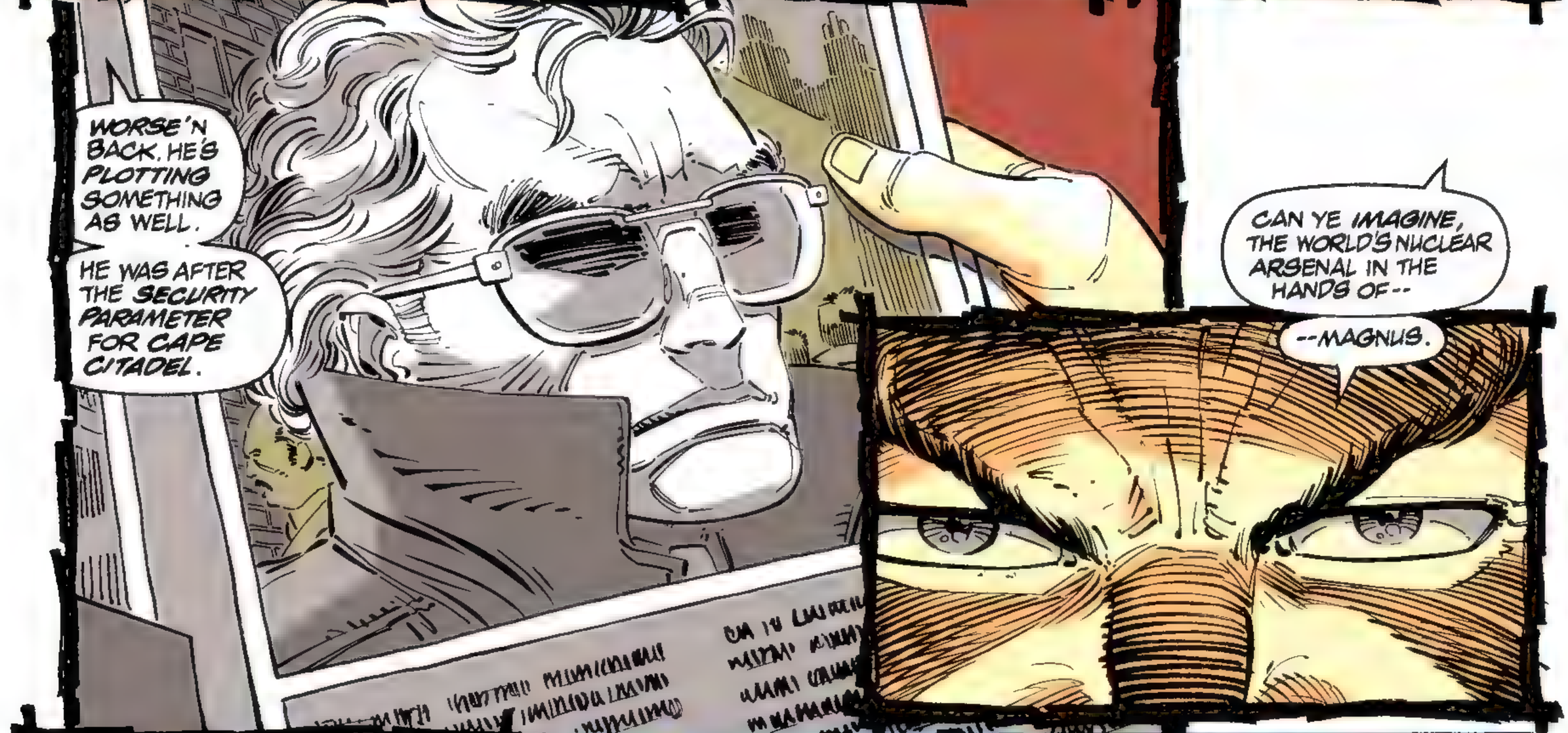

WE APOLOGIZE FOR ANY INCONVENIENCE, GOOD PEOPLE.
WE WILL BE ON OUR WAY.
<WHA-- HAPPENED? THEY ARE GONE!>
<AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON!>
<BUT TO WHERE...?!>
<WHAT DOES IT MATTER--THEY ARE GONE AND WE ARE SAFE!>
DID I MISS SOMETHING? WHY ARE THEY ACTING LIKE... WE'VE LEFT?
BECAUSE IN THEIR MINDS, WE DEPARTED AS THEY REQUESTED.
MIND CONTROL, CHUCK?
DON'T SEEM LIKE YOUR STYLE.
DESPERATE TIMES, DESPERATE MEASURES.
I WOULD IMAGINE YOU, WOLVERINE-- MORE THAN ANY OF THE OTHERS--WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT.
DIDN'T SAY I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.
JUST DON'T LIKE IT MUCH.
IF IT IS OF ANY COMFORT, LOGAN...
...I LIKE IT EVEN LESS.

BUT THEN, LIFE SELDOM QUITE WORKS OUT THE WAY ONE PLANS...
CARE FOR A PEEK AT THE FRESHMAN CLASS?
TRY'N STOP ME.
YUIR SERIOUS?! YE BEEN TALKING OF THIS FOR YEARS... YUIR GOING TO START A MUTANT STRIKE FORCE?
HARDLY, MOIRA-- MY INTENT HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO OPEN A SCHOOL.
ACCH-- THEY'RE ONLY WEE BAIRNS... CHILDREN!
I PREFER TO THINK OF THEM AS IMPRESSIONABLE-- EAGER TO LEARN.
AND THESE?
HAMMERCAMPE PROUDLY PRESENTS
THE ELF
25TH WEEK
EACH POWERFUL IN HIS OR HER OWN RIGHT BUT I BELIEVE THEIR INTERNATIONAL CITIZENSHIPS WOULD COMPLICATE THINGS AT THIS POINT.
SHOULD THE NEED ARISE, I FORESEE THEM AS THE NEXT GENERATION OF X-MEN.
A PLACE YOUNG MUTANTS COULD GO TO LEARN TO USE THEIR GENETIC ATTRIBUTES--AN INSTITUTE SET UP TO ACCOMODATE THEIR UNIQUE NEEDS.
"X"-MEN, CHARLES? NOT TOO EGOTISTICAL.
AS IN "XAVIER"? I HADN'T EVEN THOUGHT OF THAT.


IT STANDS FOR SOMETHING EXTRA IN THEIR GENES, THE X-FACTOR WHICH SEPARATES HUMANS FROM MUTANTS.
THEN LET'S BE PRAYING THESE CHILDREN HAVE THAT SOMETHING EXTRA--


--'CAUSE IF INTERPOL IS TO BE BELIEVED, THEY'RE GOING TO BE NEEDING IT SOONER THAN LATER.
THIS CAME OVER THE WIRE AN HOUR AGO.

HE'S... BACK?


WORSE'N BACK. HE'S PLOTTING SOMETHING AS WELL.
HE WAS AFTER THE SECURITY PARAMETER FOR CAPE CITADEL.
CAN YE IMAGINE, THE WORLD'S NUCLEAR ARSENAL IN THE HANDS OF--
--MAGNUS.

MAGNUS!!!

MAG
MAG
MAG
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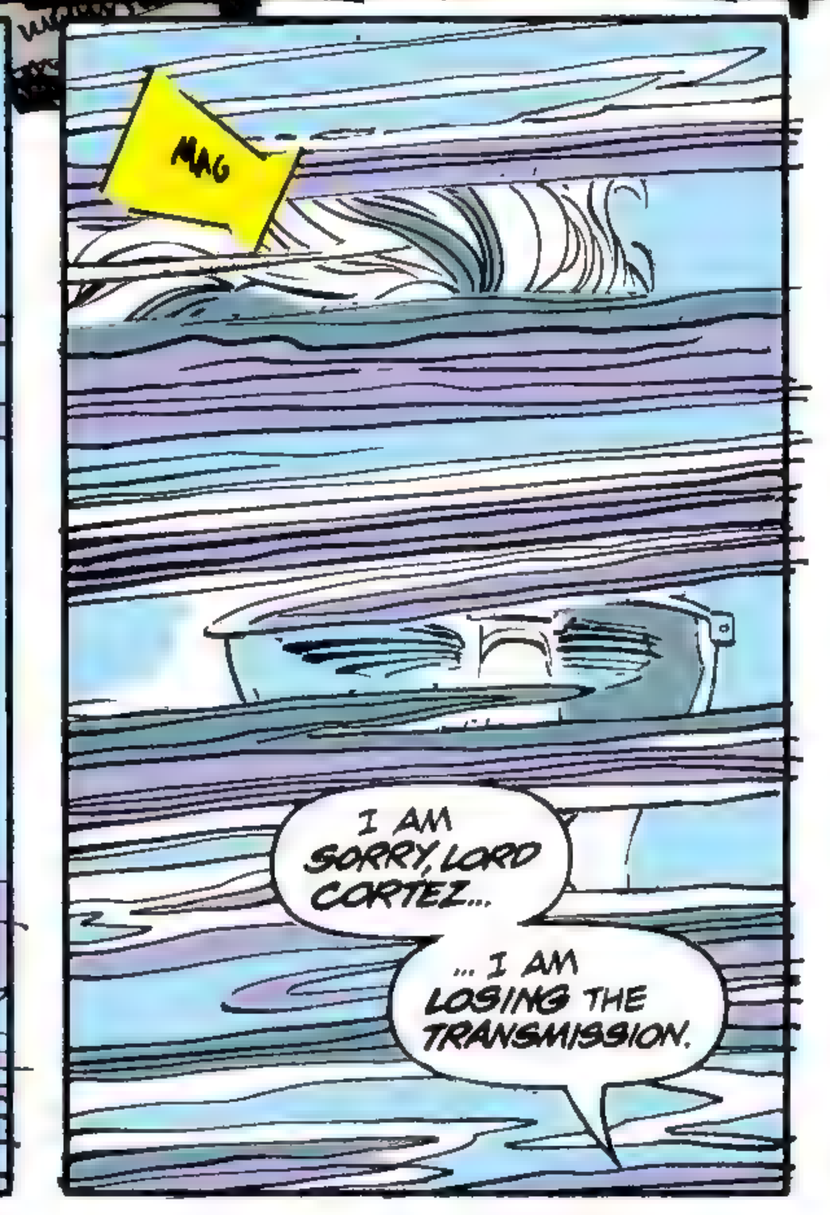
MAG


MAG
I AM SORRY, LORD CORTEZ...
... I AM LOSING THE TRANSMISSION.

YOU'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG, MILAN. THE TASK YOU SET FOR YOURSELF WAS MONUMENTAL...

...USING YOUR MUTANT ABILITY TO PSIONICALLY TRANFER MENTAL IMPULSES INTO ELECTROMAGNETIC VIDEO IMAGES IS DIFFICULT TO APPLY UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

HAVING TO FIGHT THIS HUMAN'S FORMIDABLE WILL MAKES IT NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT WHEREVER MAGNUS IS-- OUR TRUE LORD AND MASTER HAS BLESSED YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS.

THE HOME OF THE ACOLYTES.

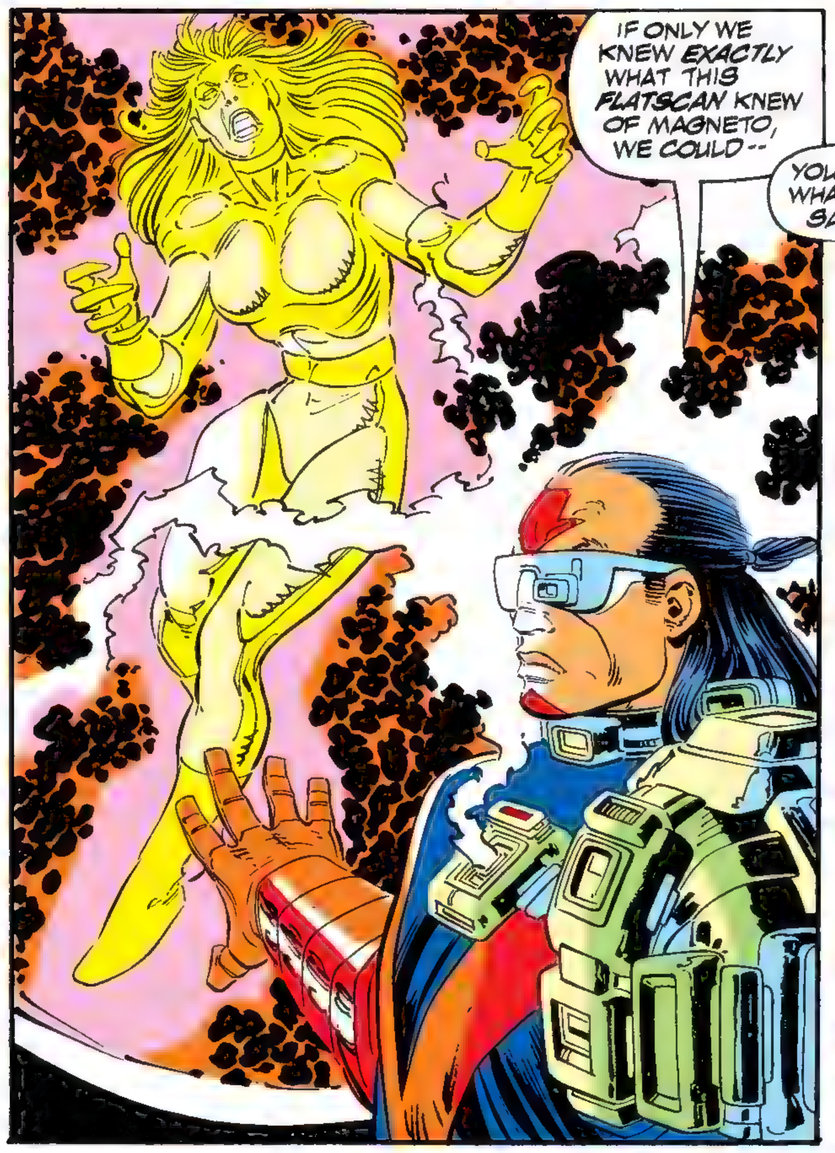
FOR DR. MOIRA MACTAGGERT-- THE PLACE IS A LIVING PURGATORY BETWEEN PAIN AND SUFFERING.

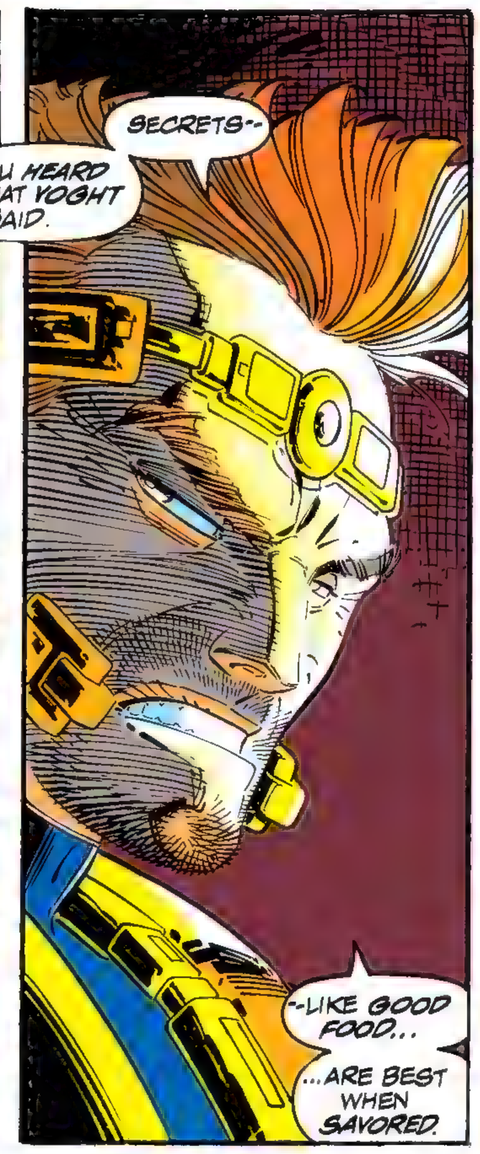
YOU HAVE SQUANDERED YOUR GIFT ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY, MILAN.

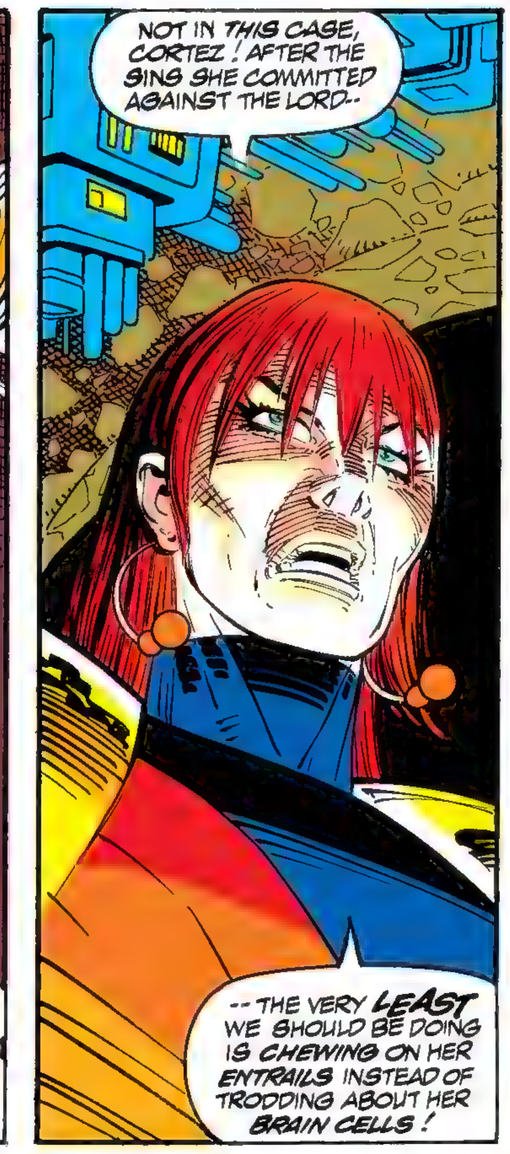
REST AND START FRESH ON THE MORROW-- IF YOU MUST.

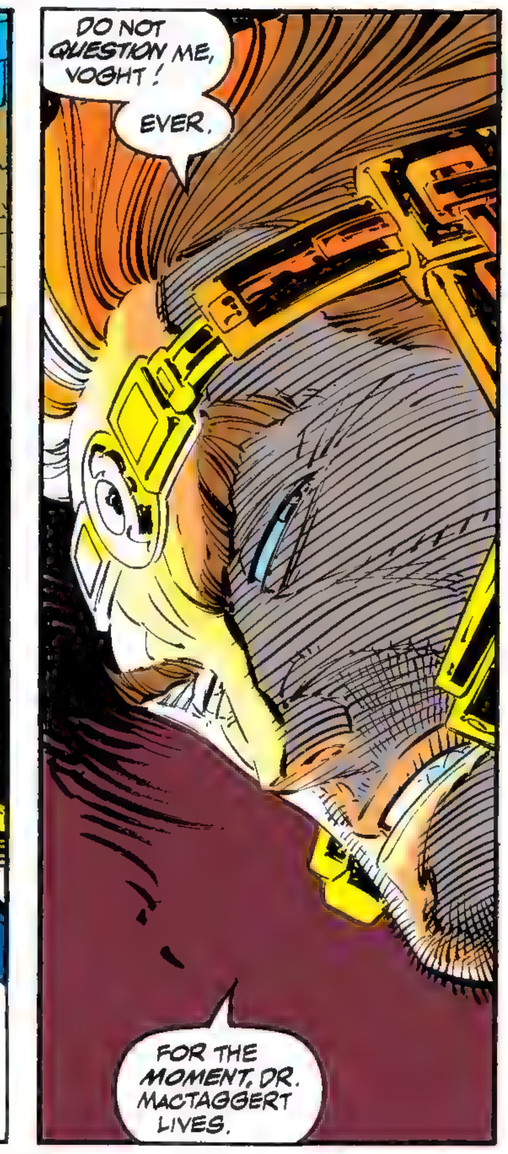
CLATTER KLIKT

I FEEL AS IF I'VE FAILED MY BRETHREN.

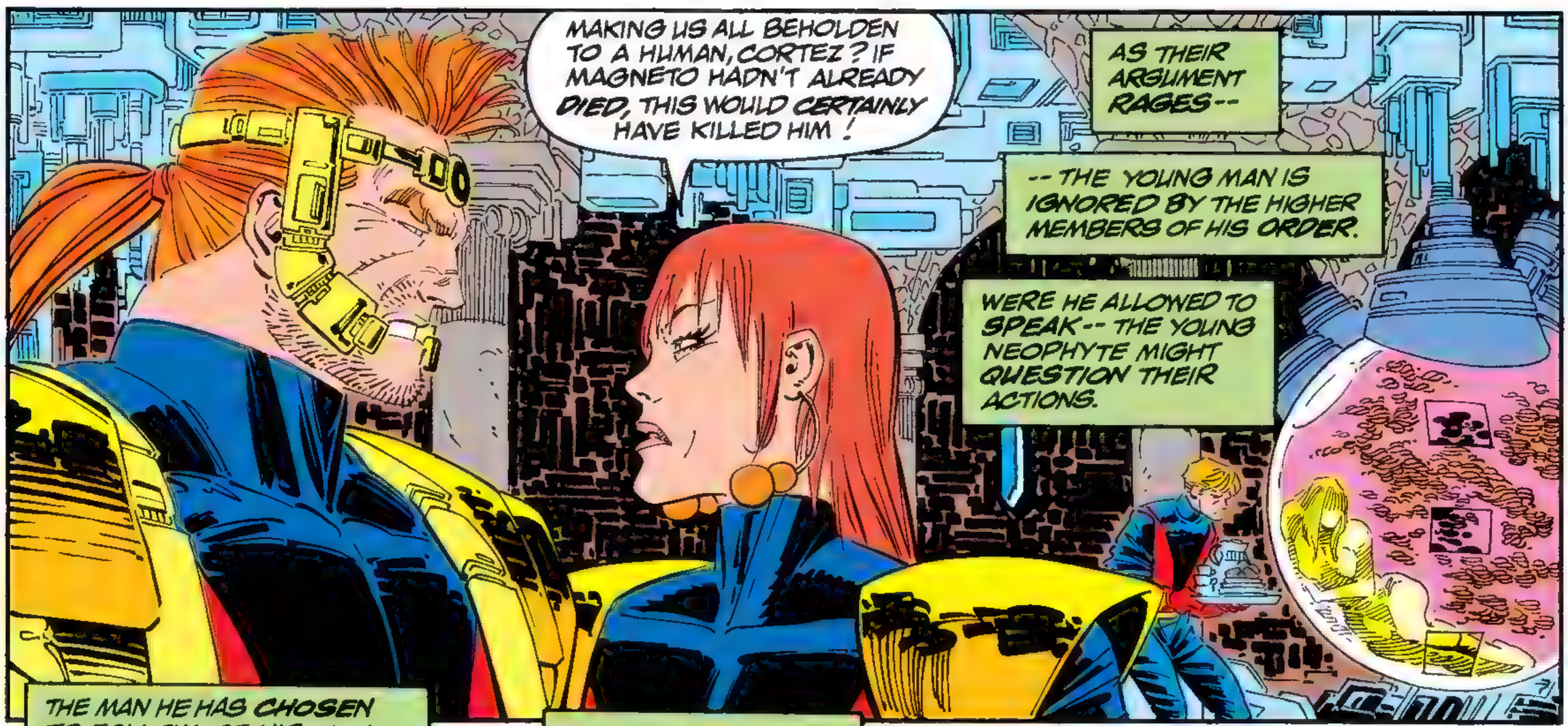


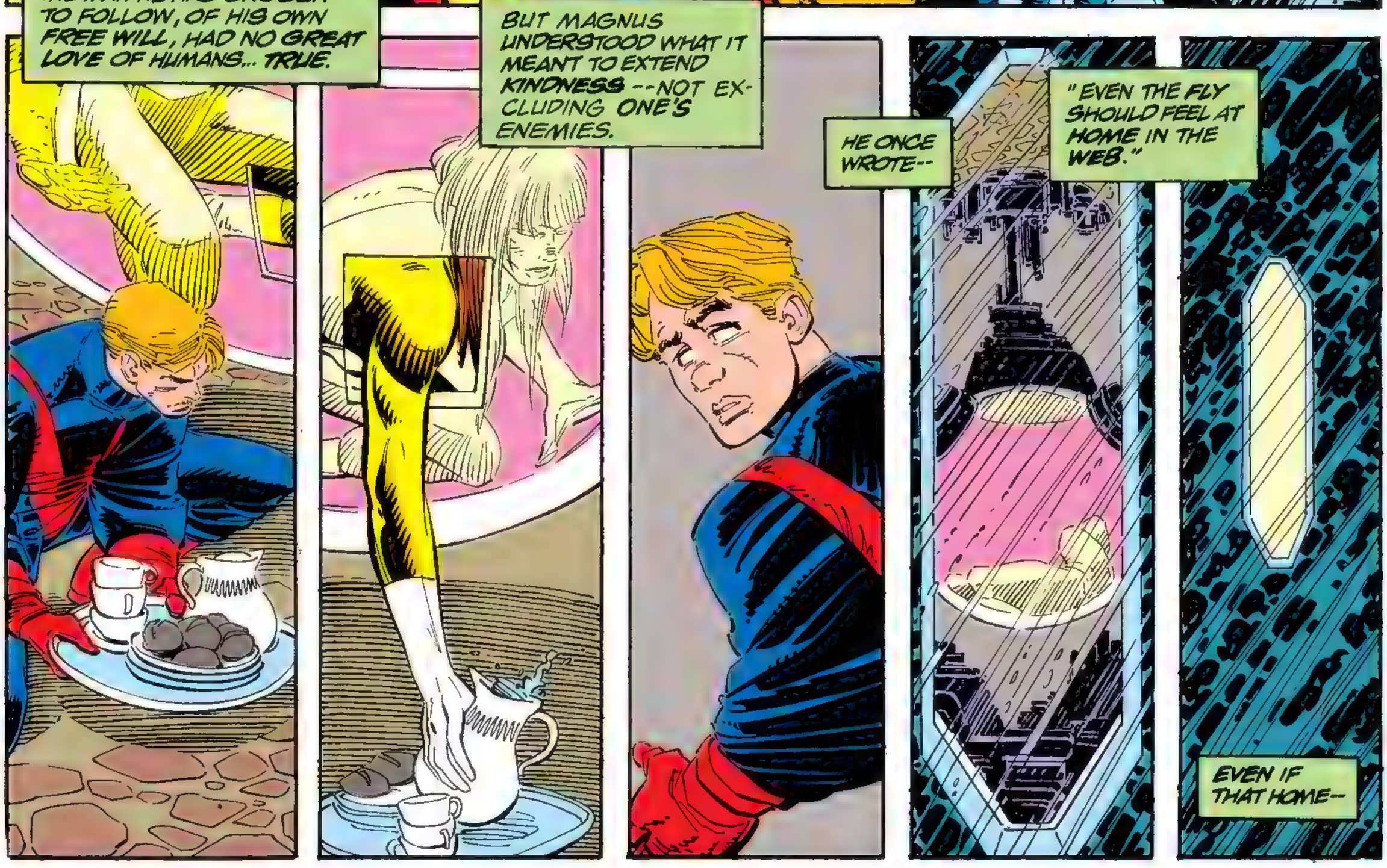






DO NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF DISMISSING THIS WOMAN, SIMPLY BECAUSE SHE IS GENETICALLY INFERIOR.
SHE IS NOT SOMEONE TO UNDERESTIMATE.
THIS SAME GENE-TRASH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR REARRANGING MAGNETO'S DNA STRUCTURE!
YES, SIR... I'LL START FRESH IN THE MORNING.


MAKING US ALL BEHOLDEN TO A HUMAN, CORTEZ? IF MAGNETO HADN'T ALREADY DIED, THIS WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE KILLED HIM!
AS THEIR ARGUMENT RAGES--
--THE YOUNG MAN IS IGNORED BY THE HIGHER MEMBERS OF HIS ORDER.
WERE HE ALLOWED TO SPEAK-- THE YOUNG NEOPHYTE MIGHT QUESTION THEIR ACTIONS.


THE MAN HE HAS CHOSEN TO FOLLOW, OF HIS OWN FREE WILL, HAD NO GREAT LOVE OF HUMANS... TRUE.
BUT MAGNUS UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT MEANT TO EXTEND KINDNESS --NOT EXCLUDING ONE'S ENEMIES.
HE ONCE WROTE--
"EVEN THE FLY SHOULD FEEL AT HOME IN THE WEB."
EVEN IF THAT HOME--

--IS A CASTLE.
OR IN THIS CASE, THE ABANDONED MONASTERY THAT IS THE MONT SAINT FRANCIS.
CURRENTLY? WE'RE THIRTY MILES AWAY FROM OUR RENDEZVOUS WITH NIGHT-CRAWLER.
BUT I DIDN'T CALL TO GIVE YOU A PROGRESS REPORT--
--RATHER, TO RECEIVE ONE.
ILLYANA IS RESTING AS COMFORTABLY AS POSSIBLE, PETER... HER COUGH SEEMS TO BE BREAKING UP.
AND THE FEVER, STEVIE?
CLIMBING, I'M AFRAID.
I'LL KEEP YOU POSTED.
SEE THAT YOU DO, MS. HUNTER.
RELAX, COLOSSUS, I KNOW JUST HOW IT FEELS WHEN YOU'RE WAIT--
I DOUBT THAT YOU DO, ROBERT.
PARDON?
HOW IS MY SISTER FEELING?
I CAME FROM A CLOSE, LOVING HOUSEHOLD--ONLY TO HAVE LOST EACH MEMBER OF MY FAMILY TO ONE TRAGEDY AFTER ANOTHER.
ILLYANA IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN MY LIFE.
WITHOUT HER, I HAVE NOTHING.
DON'T DEMEAN MY FEELINGS BY CLAIMING YOU "UNDERSTAND."
FOR YOU MOST CERTAINLY DO NOT.
EXCUSE ME FOR CARING!
TIN HEAD!

ACCORDING TO THE RECORDS WE "APPROPRIATED" FROM THE FAA COMPUTERS-- AN UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT WAS SPOTTED IN THE AIRSPACE OVER MIDDLEBOROUGH TWO DAYS AGO.

IT IS SAFE TO ASSUME IT WAS THE ACOLYTES, ESCAPING AFTER THEIR ATTEMPTED "GENETIC CLEANSING."*

CEREBRO PROJECTED A FLIGHT PLAN, COMBINED WITH THE INFORMATION THE PROFESSOR GATHERED OVER THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS--

--INDICATES THE ACOLYTE BASE IS SOMEWHERE IN THE NORTH OF FRANCE.

BUT UNLESS FORGE'S AUGMENTATION CONSOLE CAN PUNCTURE THEIR CLOAKING DEVICE--

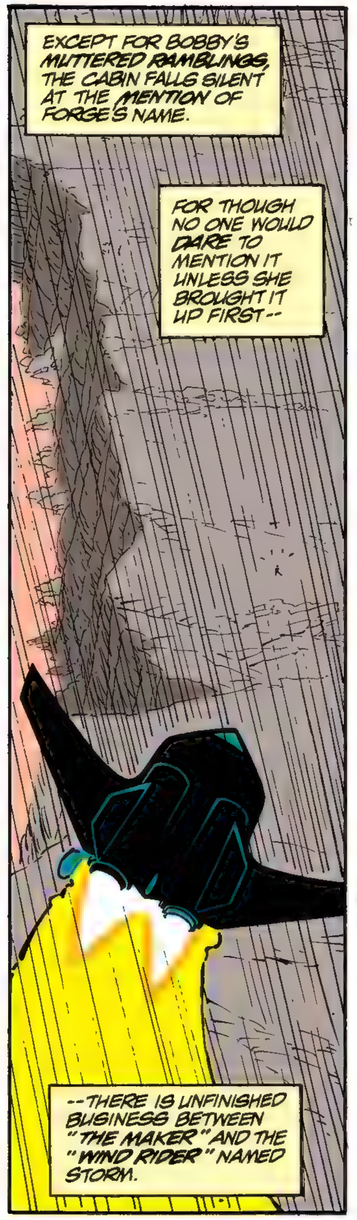
--THIS COULD MEAN WEEKS OF SEARCHING FOR THE PROVERBIAL NEEDLE.

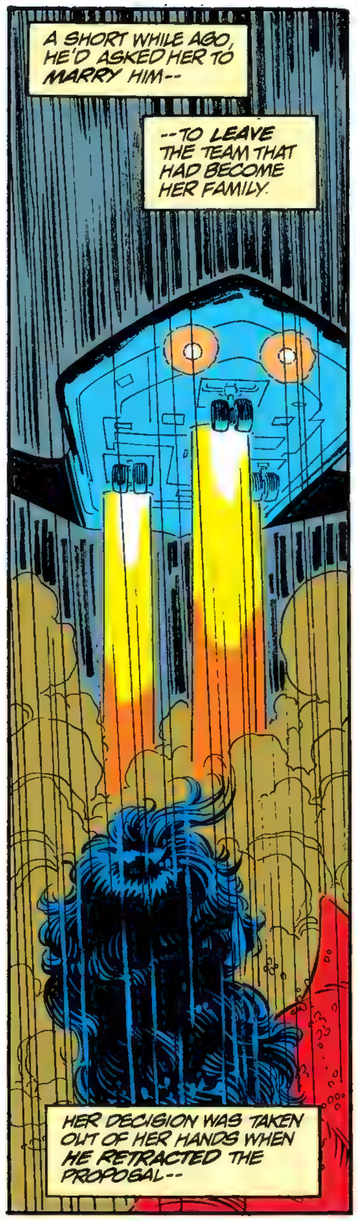
LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH BEING AN ONLY CHILD.

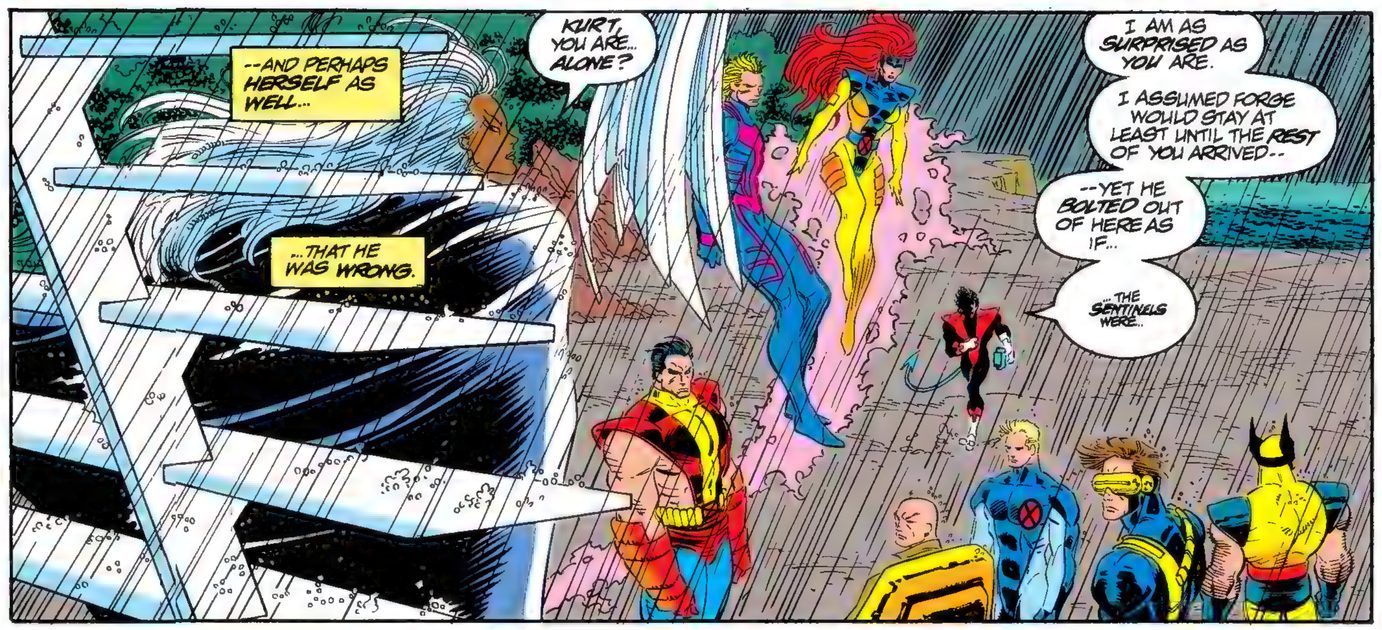
"ALMOST NONEXISTENT."

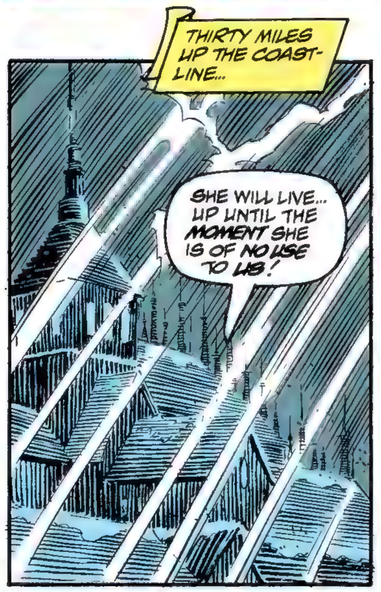
HIS ALUMINUM-FOIL HEAD IS GONNA BE NON-EXISTENT WHEN I LOB THIS MEGA SNOW-BALL UPSIDE HIS FACE!

* IN UNCANNY X-MEN #298.--Bob

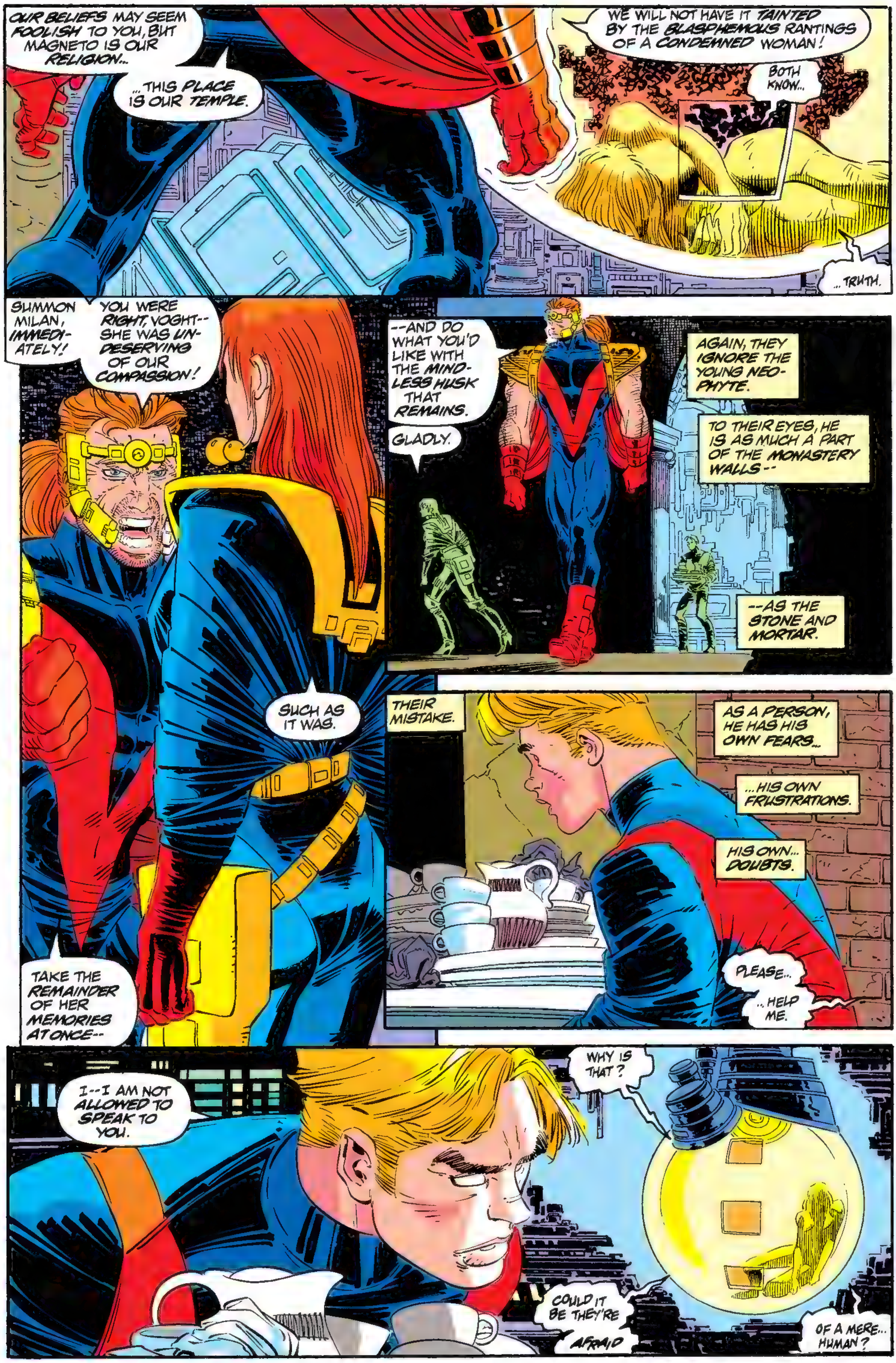


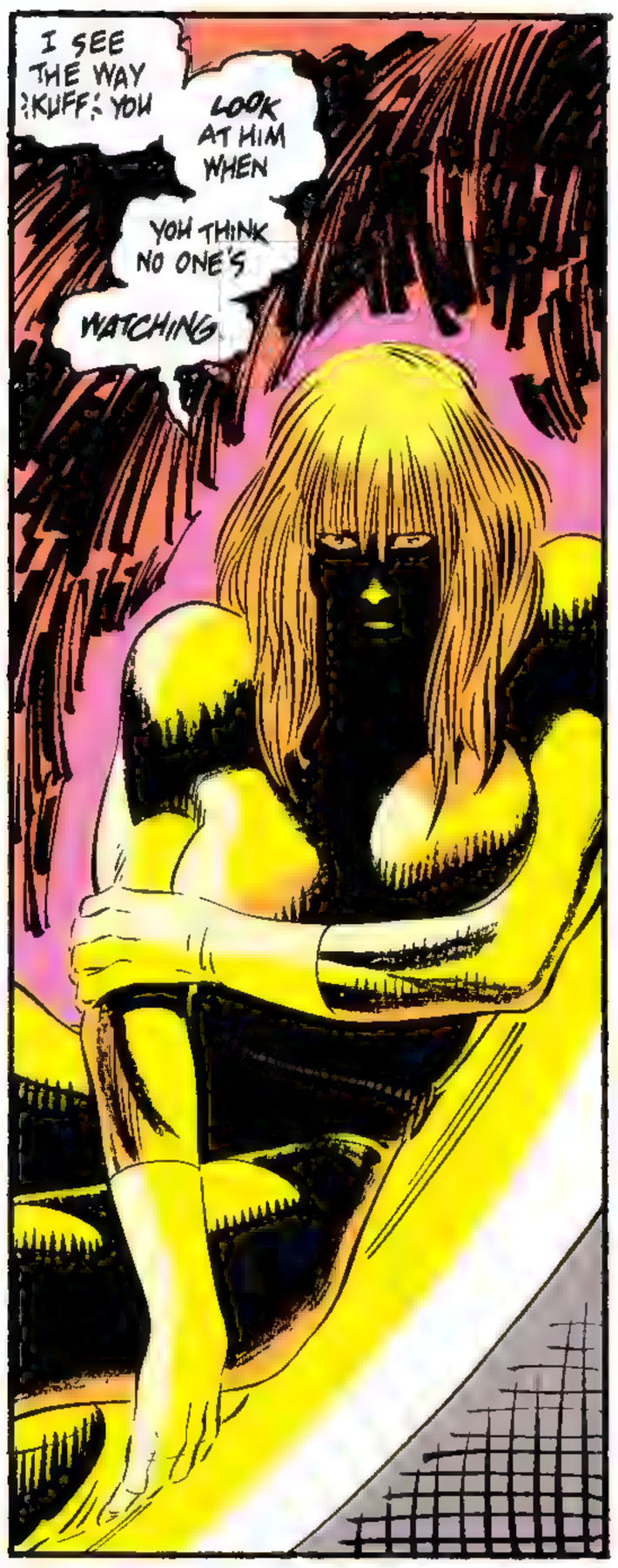


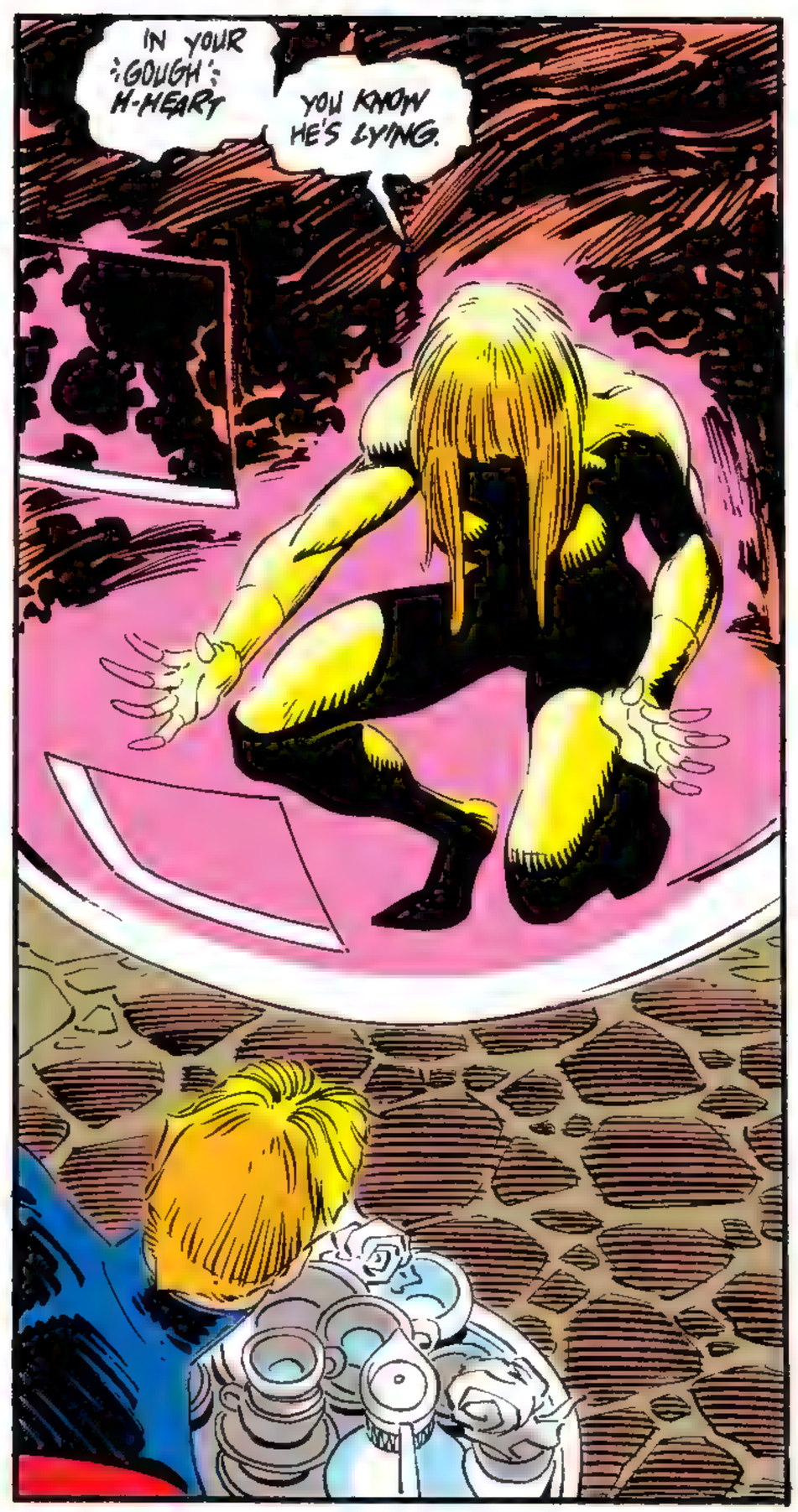




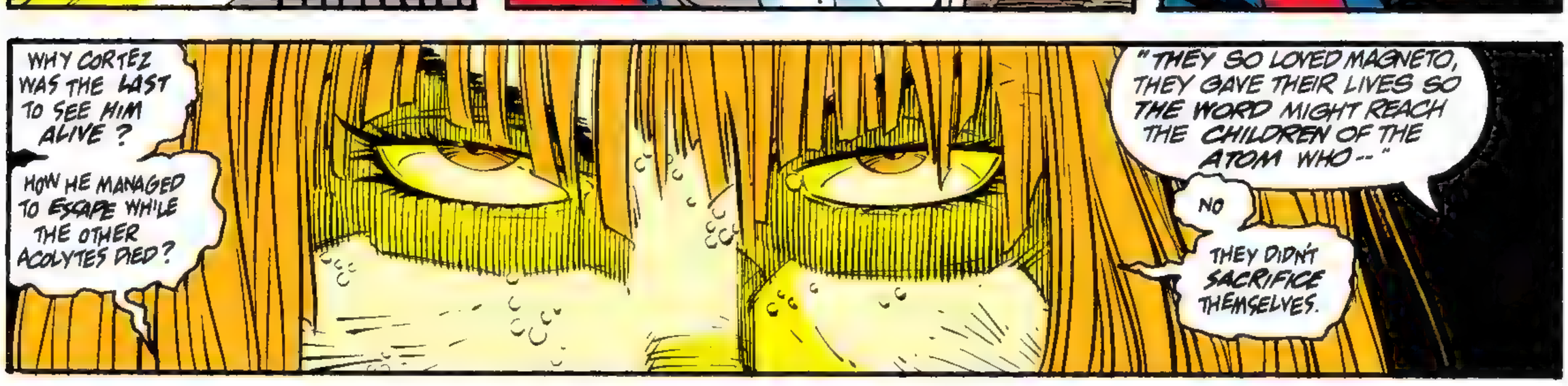
REMEMBER, I WAS THERE WHEN SHE USED HER TECHNOLOGY TO TURN THE X-MEN AGAINST EACH OTHER!
WHILE THEY EVENTUALLY PROVED TOO STRONG-WILLED FOR THE PROCESS TO LAST...
...THINK HOW MANY NEW RECRUITS WE COULD ENLIST TO OUR GLORIOUS CRUSADE!
OUR RANKS HAVE GROWN STRICTLY FROM MUTANTS WHO HAVE SEEN THE WISDOM OF MAGNETO'S WAY--
--WHY SULLY THE MOVEMENT WITH RELUCTANT CONVERTS?
BECAUSE THE ENTIRE WORLD IS NOT AS BRIGHT AS YOU AND I, VOGHT.
BECAUSE MOST PEOPLE ARE LIKE LAMBS WHO WILL GO SILENTLY TO SLAUGHTER AT THE HANDS OF THE HUMANS--
--IF WE DO NOT PROTECT THEM IN MAGNUS'S NAME.
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, BECAUSE I SAID SO
OOOOWW!
WOULDN'T WANT TO ARGUE
WITH YOU :COG: EH, FABIAN?
NOT YOU... THE MAN WHO MURDERED--
SHUT UP, WOMAN!
THEY'LL KILL US BOTH!
NO ONE IS INTERESTED IN YOUR LIES!
IT'S THE TRUTH, CORTEZ.
REMEMBER...?
... I WAS THERE, TOO -- WHEN YOU
ENOUGH, HUMAN SOW!
YOU'VE ABUSED EVEN THE MODICUM OF COURTESY I'VE EXTENDED!

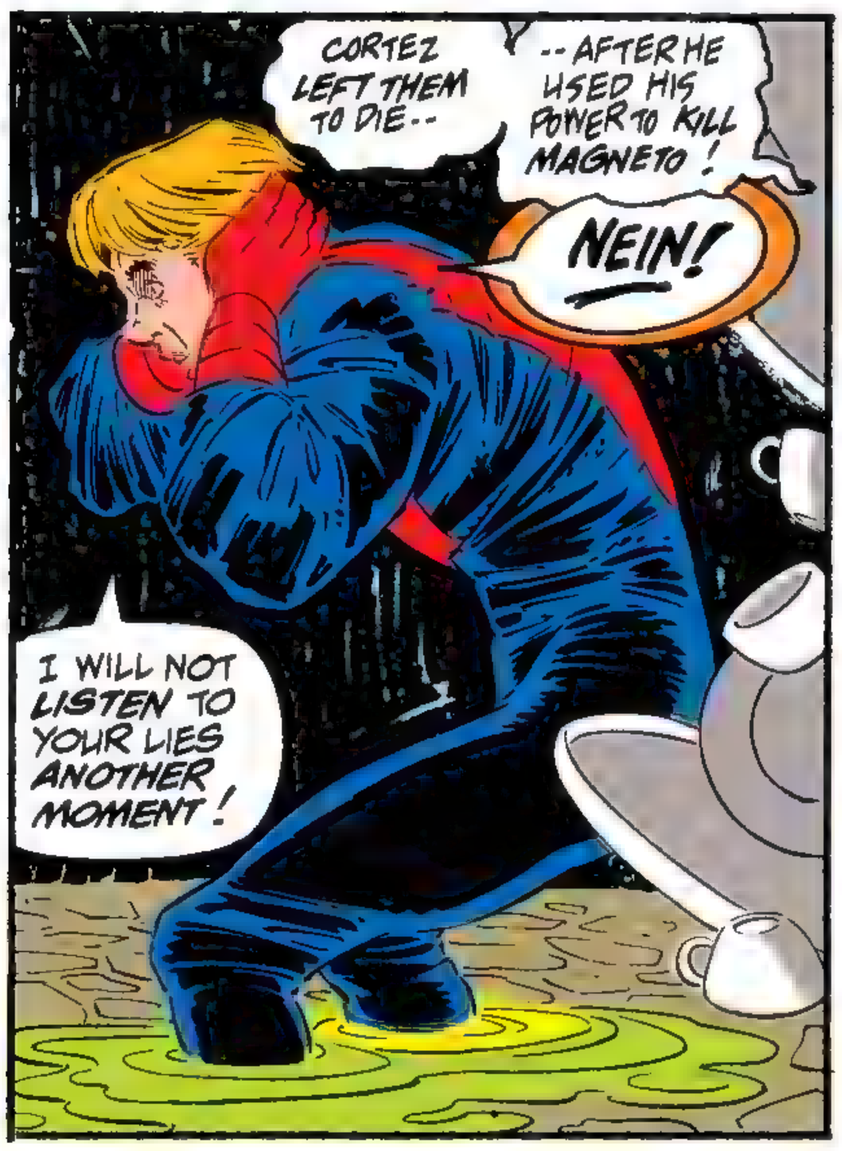

OUR BELIEFS MAY SEEM FOOLISH TO YOU, BUT MAGNETO IS OUR RELIGION...
...THIS PLACE IS OUR TEMPLE.
WE WILL NOT HAVE IT TAINTED BY THE BLASPHEMOUS RANTINGS OF A CONDEMNED WOMAN!
BOTH KNOW...
...TRUTH.
SUMMON MILAN, IMMEDIATELY!
YOU WERE RIGHT, VOGHT-- SHE WAS UNDESERVING OF OUR COMPASSION!
--AND DO WHAT YOU'D LIKE WITH THE MINDLESS HUSK THAT REMAINS.
GLADLY.
AGAIN, THEY IGNORE THE YOUNG NEOPHYTE.
TO THEIR EYES, HE IS AS MUCH A PART OF THE MONASTERY WALLS--
--AS THE STONE AND MORTAR.
SUCH AS IT WAS.
TAKE THE REMAINDER OF HER MEMORIES AT ONCE--
THEIR MISTAKE.
AS A PERSON, HE HAS HIS OWN FEARS...
...HIS OWN FRUSTRATIONS.
HIS OWN... DOUBTS.
PLEASE...
...HELP ME.
I--I AM NOT ALLOWED TO SPEAK TO YOU.
WHY IS THAT?
COULD IT BE THEY'RE AFRAID
OF A MERE... HUMAN?

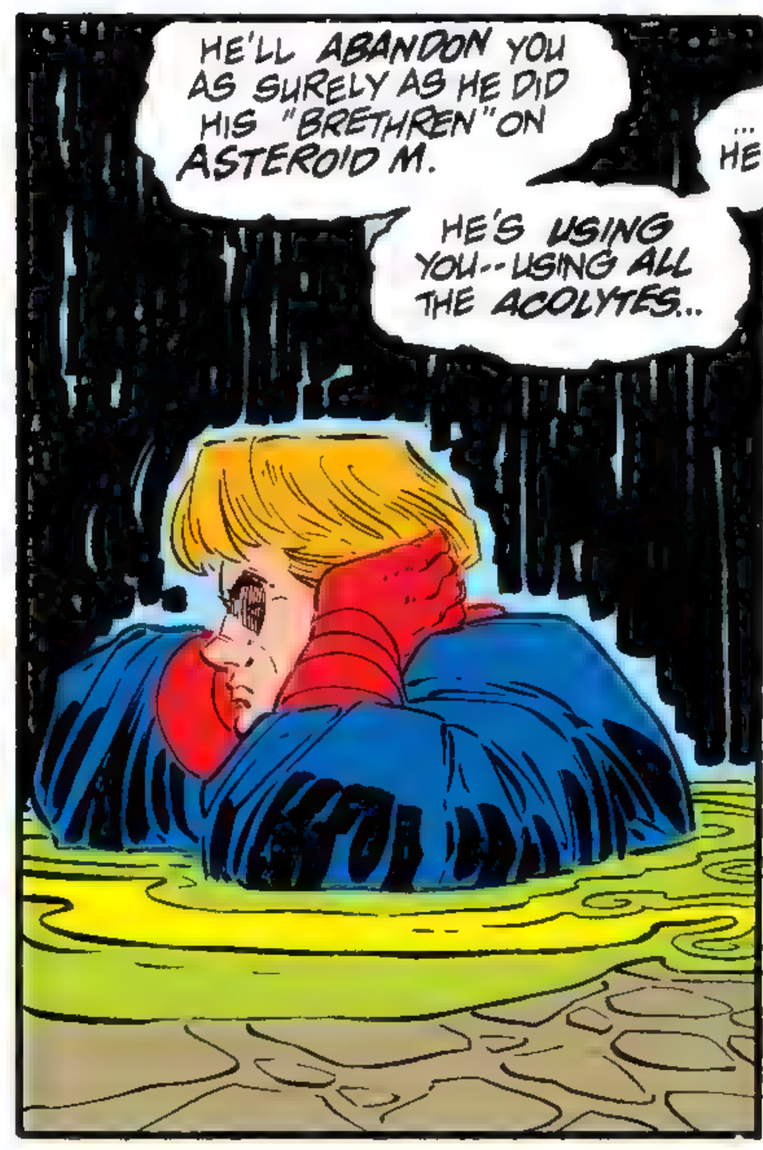

I SEE THE WAY :KUFF: YOU
LOOK AT HIM WHEN
YOU THINK NO ONE'S
WATCHING

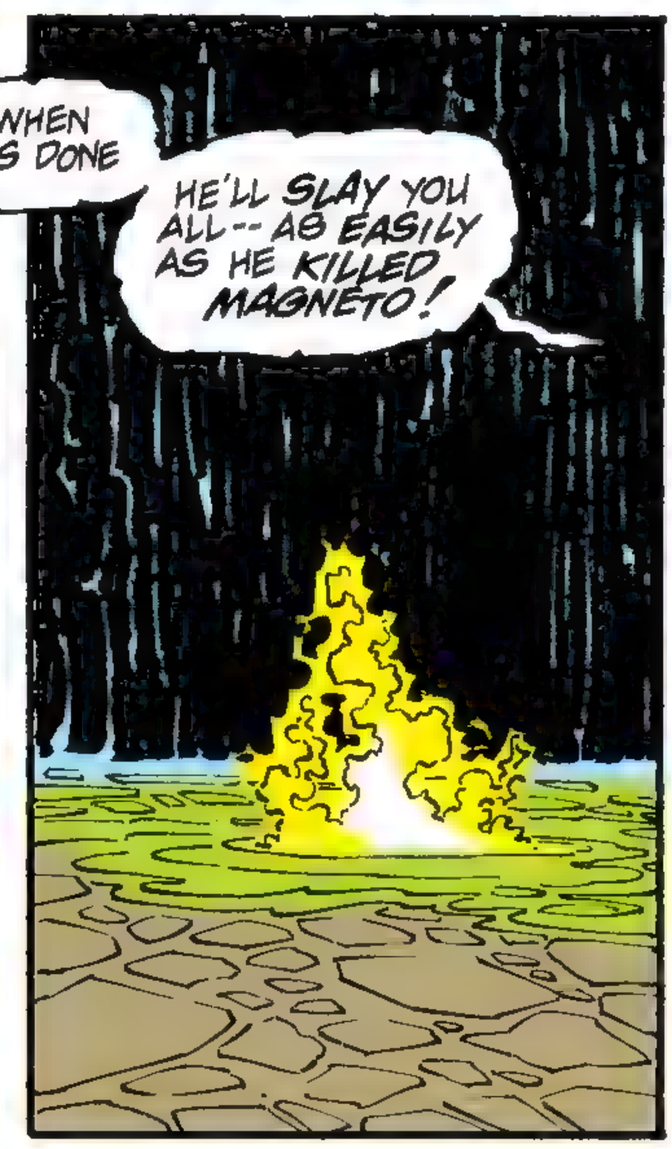

IN YOUR :GOUGH: H-HEART
YOU KNOW HE'S LYING.

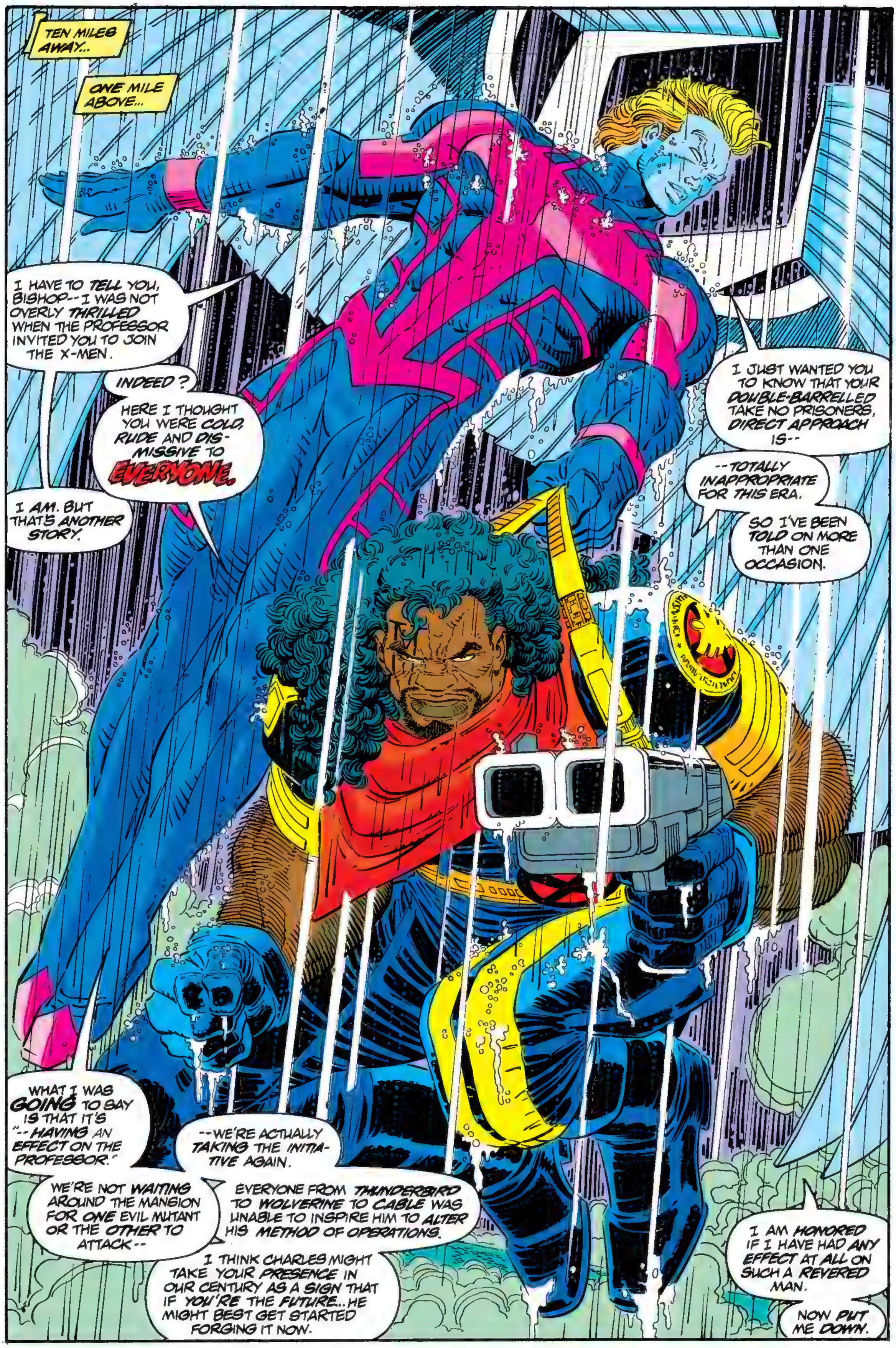
"LORD CORTEZ WAS WITH OUR SAVIOR AT THE MOMENT OF HIS DEATH. MAGNUS ENTRUSTED HIM WITH THE--"
DIDN'T ANYONE ASK--
...DIDN'T YOU WONDER...


WHY CORTEZ WAS THE LAST TO SEE HIM ALIVE?
HOW HE MANAGED TO ESCAPE WHILE THE OTHER ACOLYTES DIED?
"THEY SO LOVED MAGNETO, THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES SO THE WORD MIGHT REACH THE CHILDREN OF THE ATOM WHO--"
NO
THEY DIDN'T SACRIFICE THEMSELVES.


CORTEZ LEFT THEM TO DIE--
--AFTER HE USED HIS POWER TO KILL MAGNETO!
NEIN!
I WILL NOT LISTEN TO YOUR LIES ANOTHER MOMENT!


HE'LL ABANDON YOU AS SURELY AS HE DID HIS "BRETHREN" ON ASTEROID M.
HE'S USING YOU--USING ALL THE ACOLYTES...
...WHEN HE'S DONE


HE'LL SLAY YOU ALL--AS EASILY AS HE KILLED MAGNETO!


TEN MILES AWAY...
ONE MILE ABOVE...
I HAVE TO TELL YOU, BISHOP--I WAS NOT OVERLY THRILLED WHEN THE PROFESSOR INVITED YOU TO JOIN THE X-MEN.
INDEED?
HERE I THOUGHT YOU WERE COLD, RUDE AND DIS-MISSIVE TO EVERYONE.
I AM. BUT THAT'S ANOTHER STORY.
I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT YOUR DOUBLE-BARRELLED TAKE NO PRISONERS, DIRECT APPROACH IS--
--TOTALLY INAPPROPRIATE FOR THIS ERA.
SO I'VE BEEN TOLD ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION.
WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY IS THAT IT'S "--HAVING AN EFFECT ON THE PROFESSOR."
--WE'RE ACTUALLY TAKING THE INITIA-TIVE AGAIN.
WE'RE NOT WAITING AROUND THE MANSION FOR ONE EVIL MUTANT OR THE OTHER TO ATTACK--
EVERYONE FROM THUNDERBIRD TO WOLVERINE TO CABLE WAS UNABLE TO INSPIRE HIM TO ALTER HIS METHOD OF OPERATIONS.
I THINK CHARLES MIGHT TAKE YOUR PRESENCE IN OUR CENTURY AS A SIGN THAT IF YOU'RE THE FUTURE..HE MIGHT BEST GET STARTED FORGING IT NOW.
I AM HONORED IF I HAVE HAD ANY EFFECT AT ALL ON SUCH A REVERED MAN.
NOW PUT ME DOWN.

?!

A VERITABLE FORTRESS...

...SURROUNDED BY WATER ON ALL SIDES...

...BUFFERED BY SCORES OF, NO DOUBT, INNOCENT CIVILIANS...

... I SPENT A LIFETIME TRACKING PREY, ARCHANGEL.

TRUST ME.

WE'VE FOUND THE ENEMY.

GAMESMASTER!

I DEMAND AN AUDIENCE!

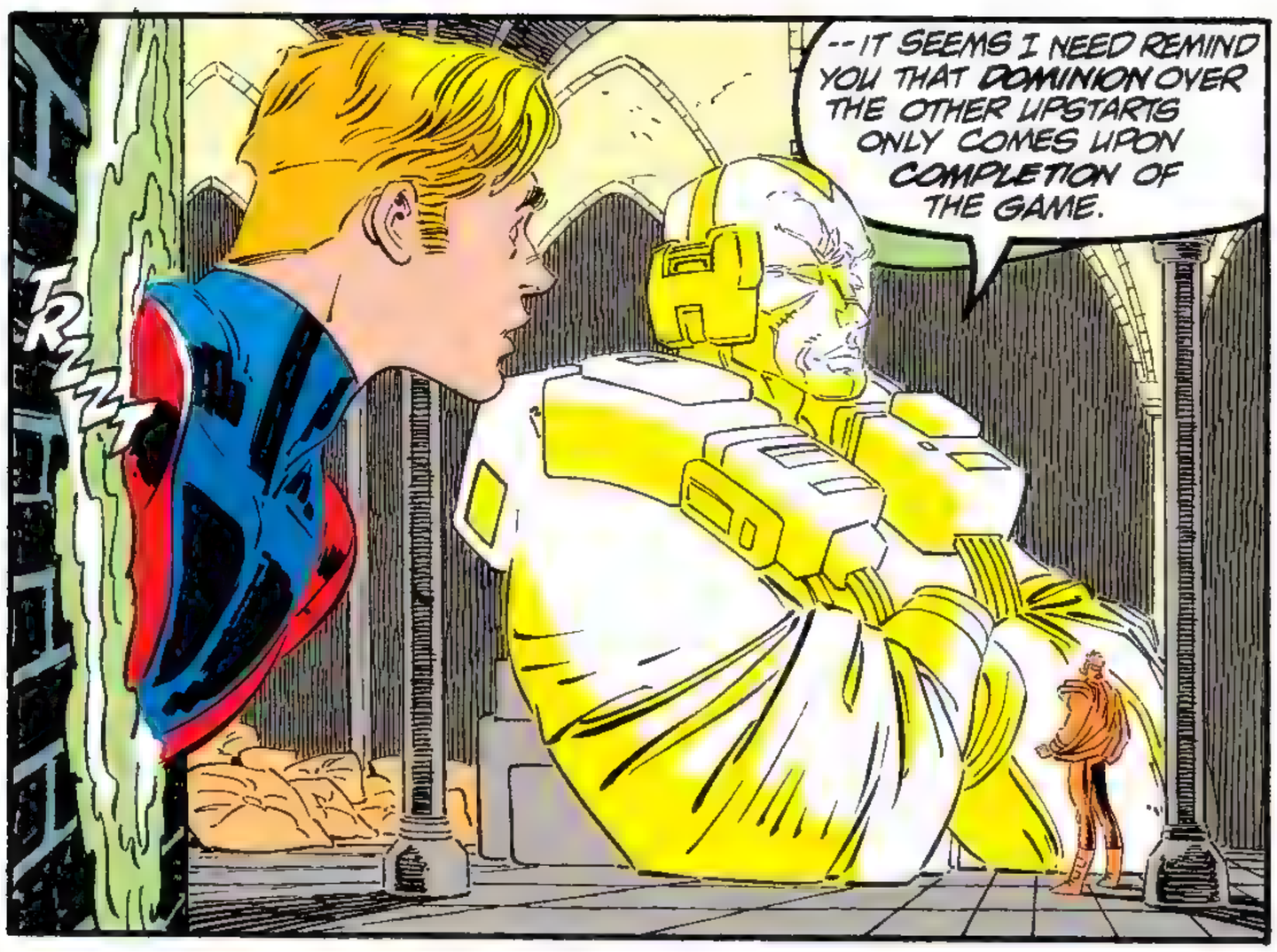
YOU CLAIM TO BE AN OMNIPATH--YOUR MIND IN ALL PLACES AT ALL TIMES.

AS LEADER OF THE UPSTARTS, I DEMAND YOU TO CONTACT SHAW, FITZROY AND CREED!

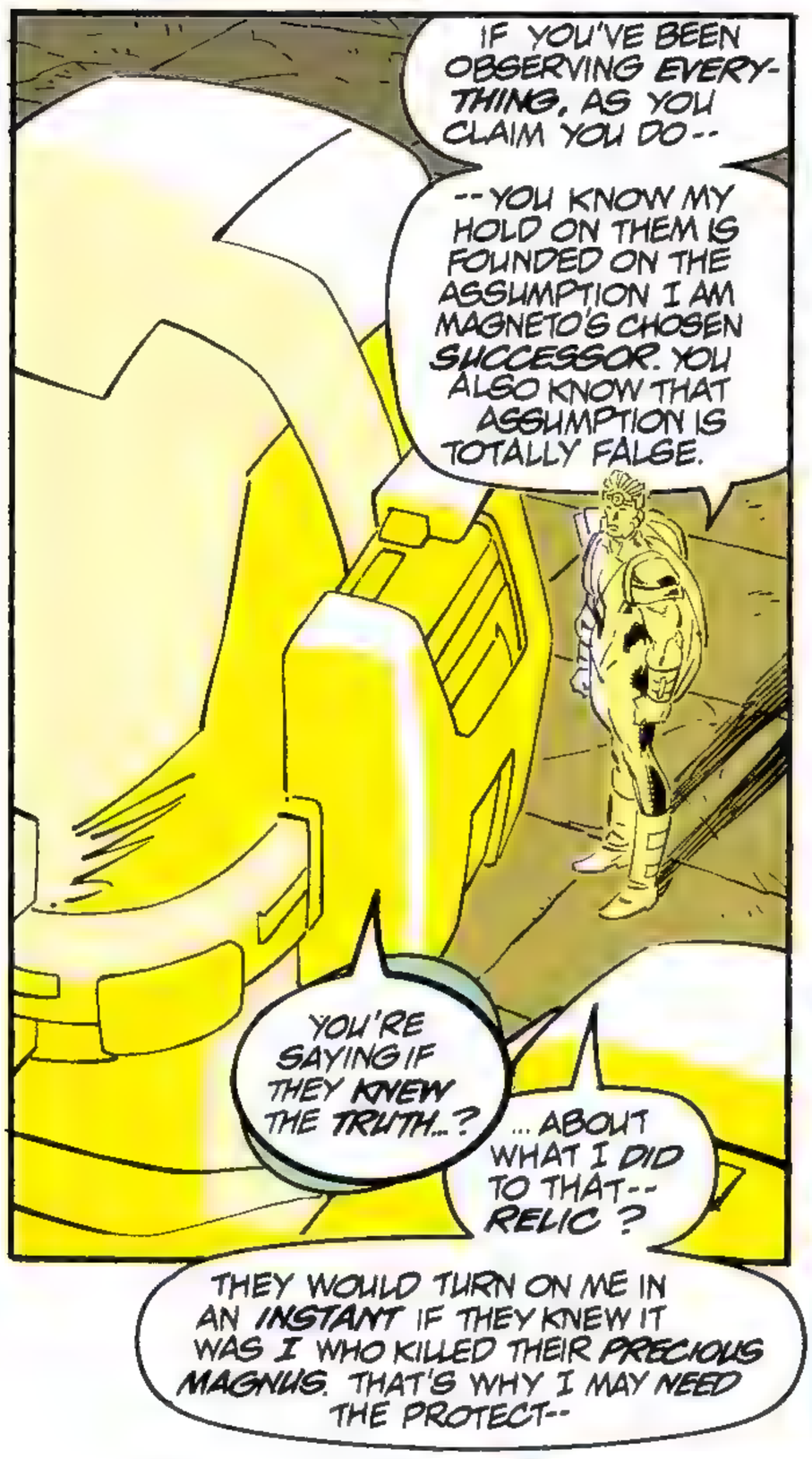
IT APPEARS I MAY HAVE NEED OF THEIR RESOURCES.

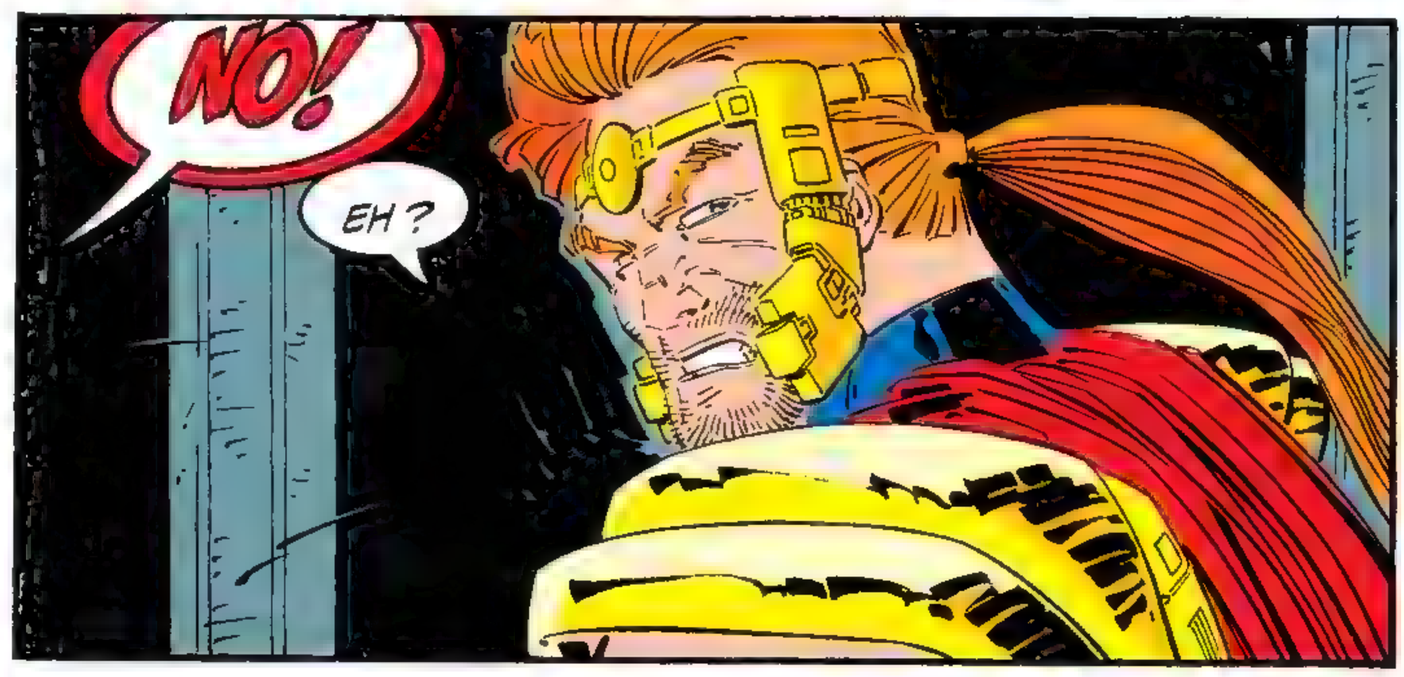
AS USUAL, CORTEZ--YOUR REACH FAR EXCEEDS YOUR GRASP.

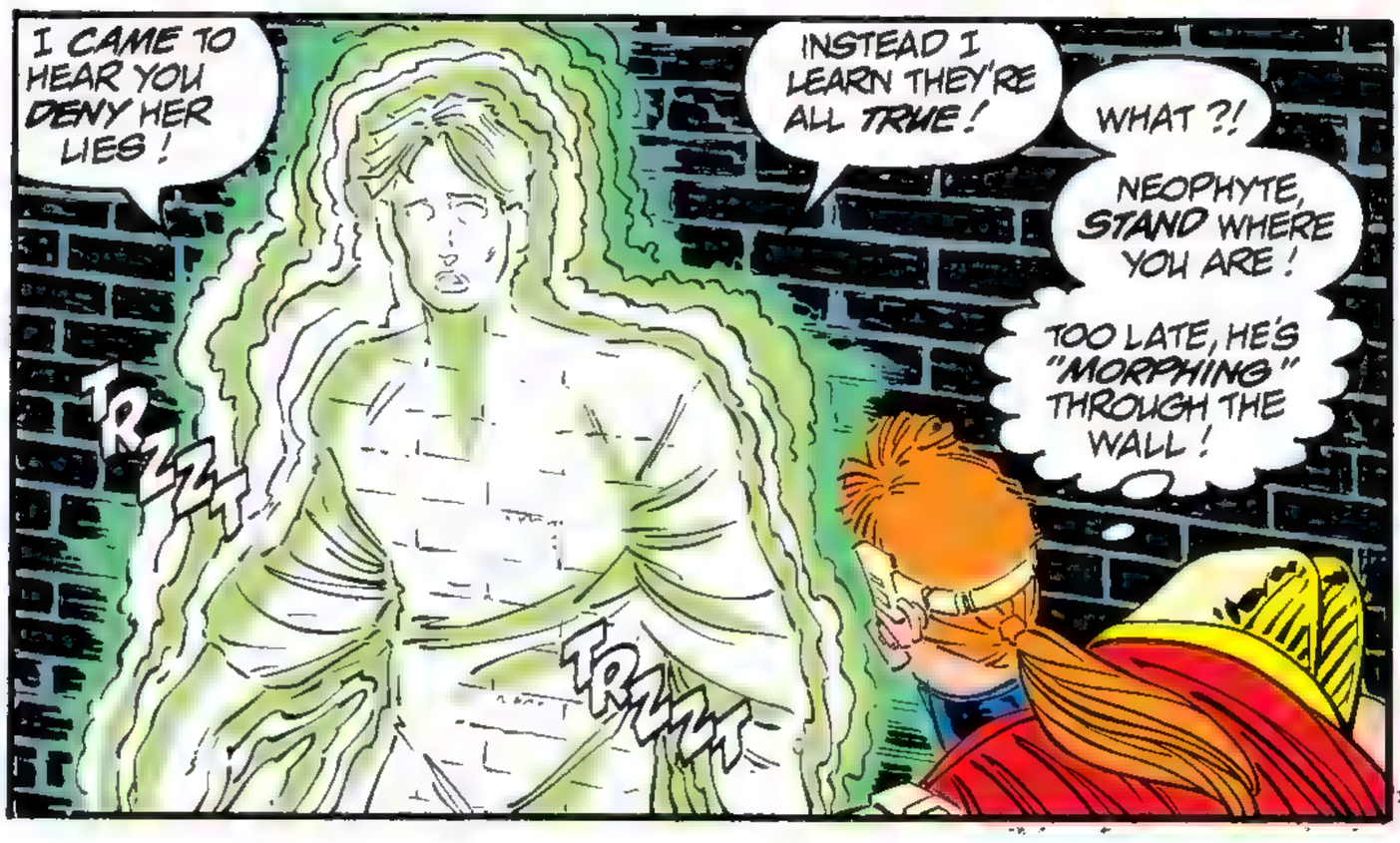
WHILE IT IS TRUE, YOU'VE ACCRUED THE MAJORITY OF POINTS IN THE UPSTART COMPETITION TO DATE--

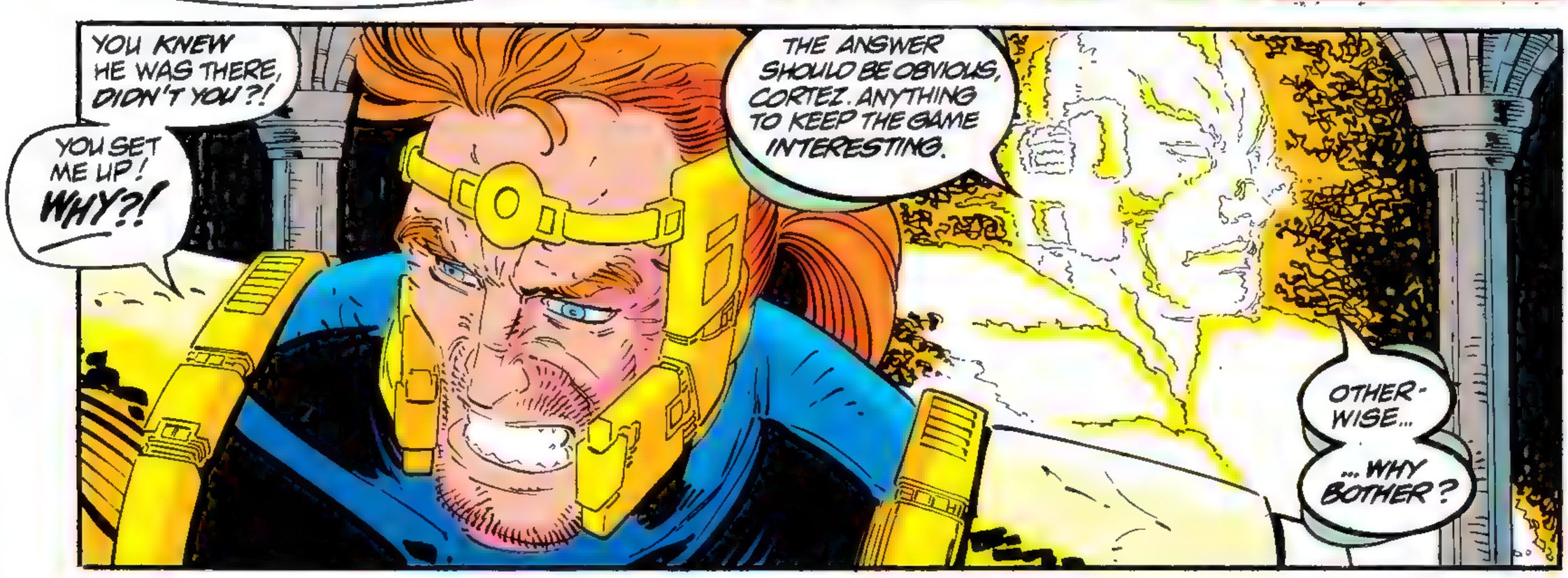

TRZZZT
--IT SEEMS I NEED REMIND YOU THAT DOMINION OVER THE OTHER UPSTARTS ONLY COMES UPON COMPLETION OF THE GAME.

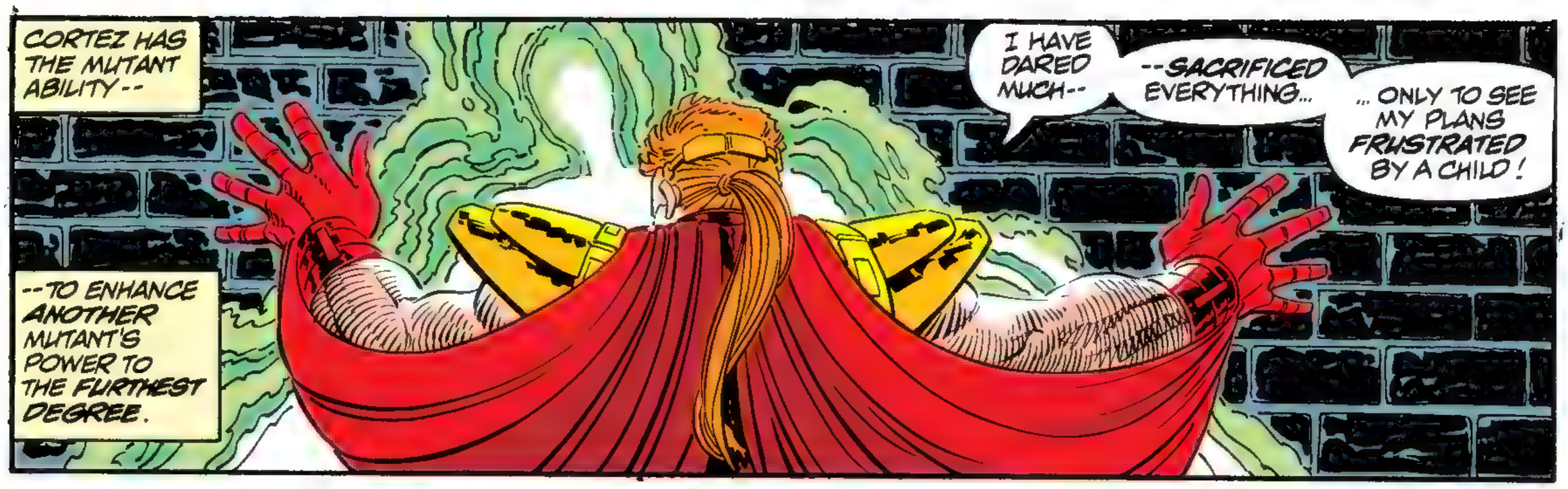
FOR THE MOMENT, I'M AFRAID...
... YOU WILL HAVE TO MAKE DUE WITH THE HERD OF MINDLESS SHEEP YOU'VE TAKEN SUCH CARE TO TEND


IF YOU'VE BEEN OBSERVING EVERYTHING, AS YOU CLAIM YOU DO--
--YOU KNOW MY HOLD ON THEM IS FOUNDED ON THE ASSUMPTION I AM MAGNETO'S CHOSEN SUCCESSOR. YOU ALSO KNOW THAT ASSUMPTION IS TOTALLY FALSE.
YOU'RE SAYING IF THEY KNEW THE TRUTH...?
... ABOUT WHAT I DID TO THAT-- RELIC ?
THEY WOULD TURN ON ME IN AN INSTANT IF THEY KNEW IT WAS I WHO KILLED THEIR PRECIOUS MAGNUS. THAT'S WHY I MAY NEED THE PROTECT--

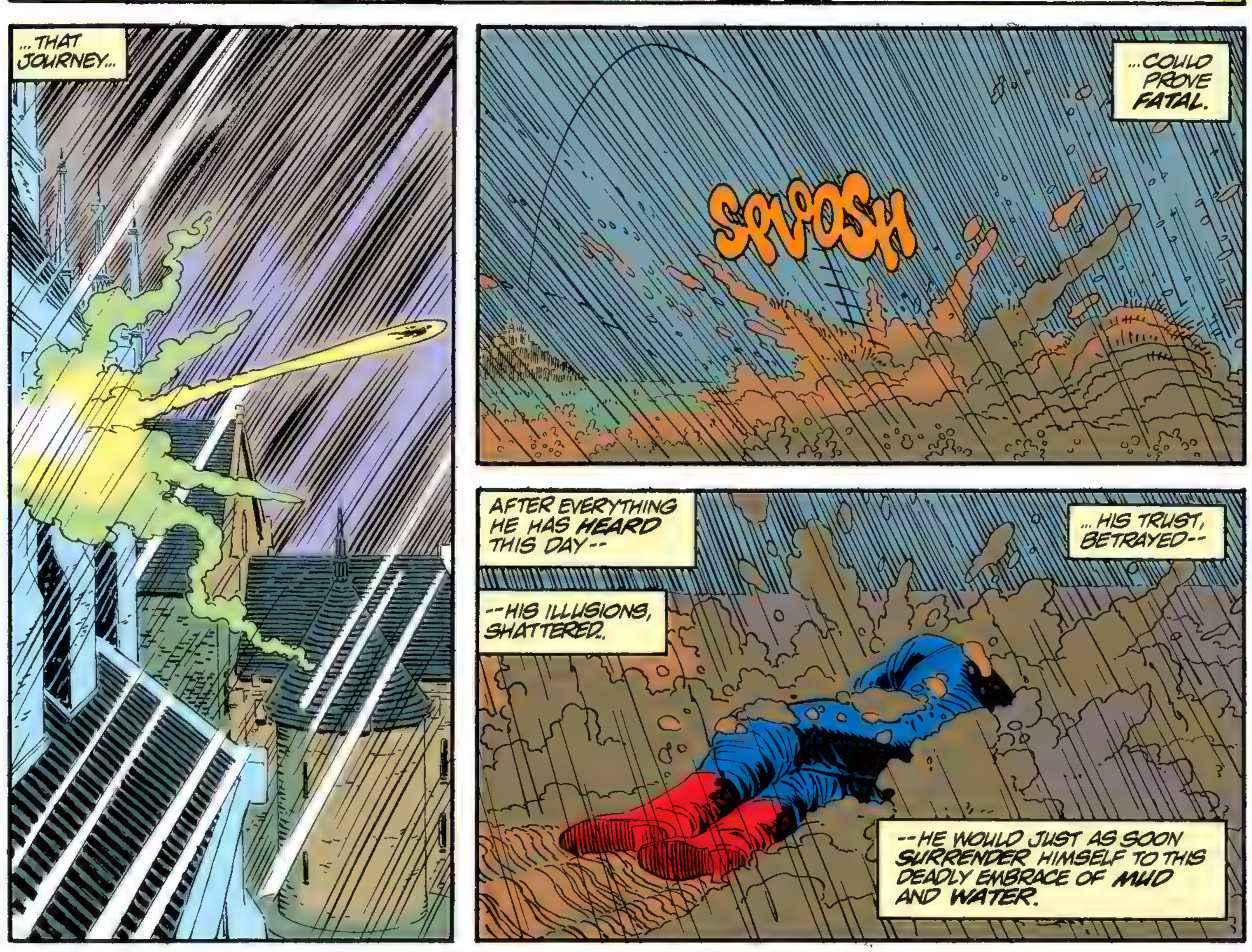

NO!
EH ?

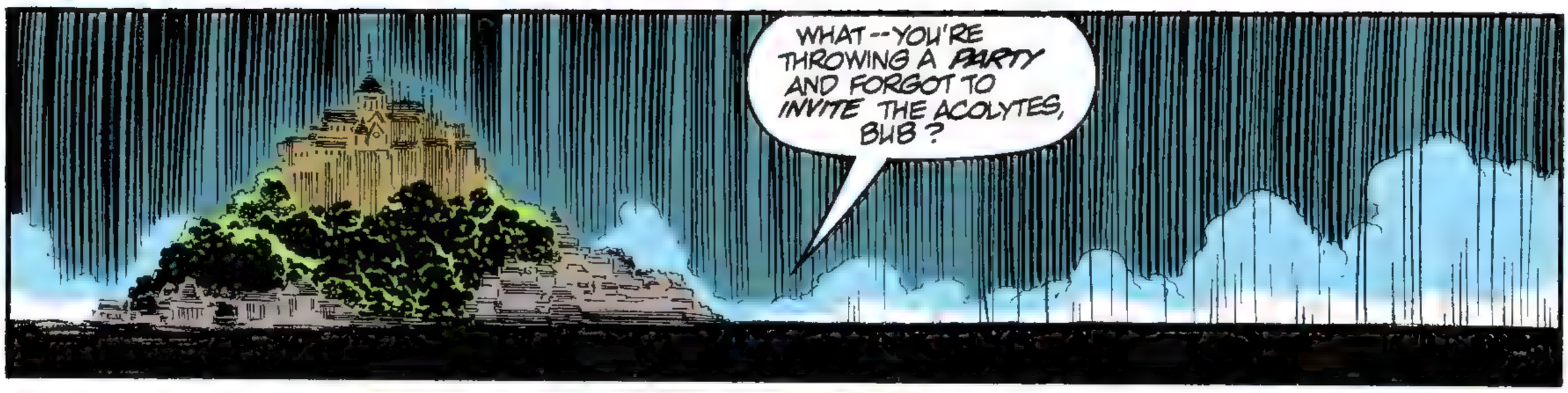

I CAME TO HEAR YOU DENY HER LIES !
INSTEAD I LEARN THEY'RE ALL TRUE !
WHAT ?!
NEOPHYTE, STAND WHERE YOU ARE !
TOO LATE, HE'S "MORPHING" THROUGH THE WALL !
TRZZZT
TRZZZT

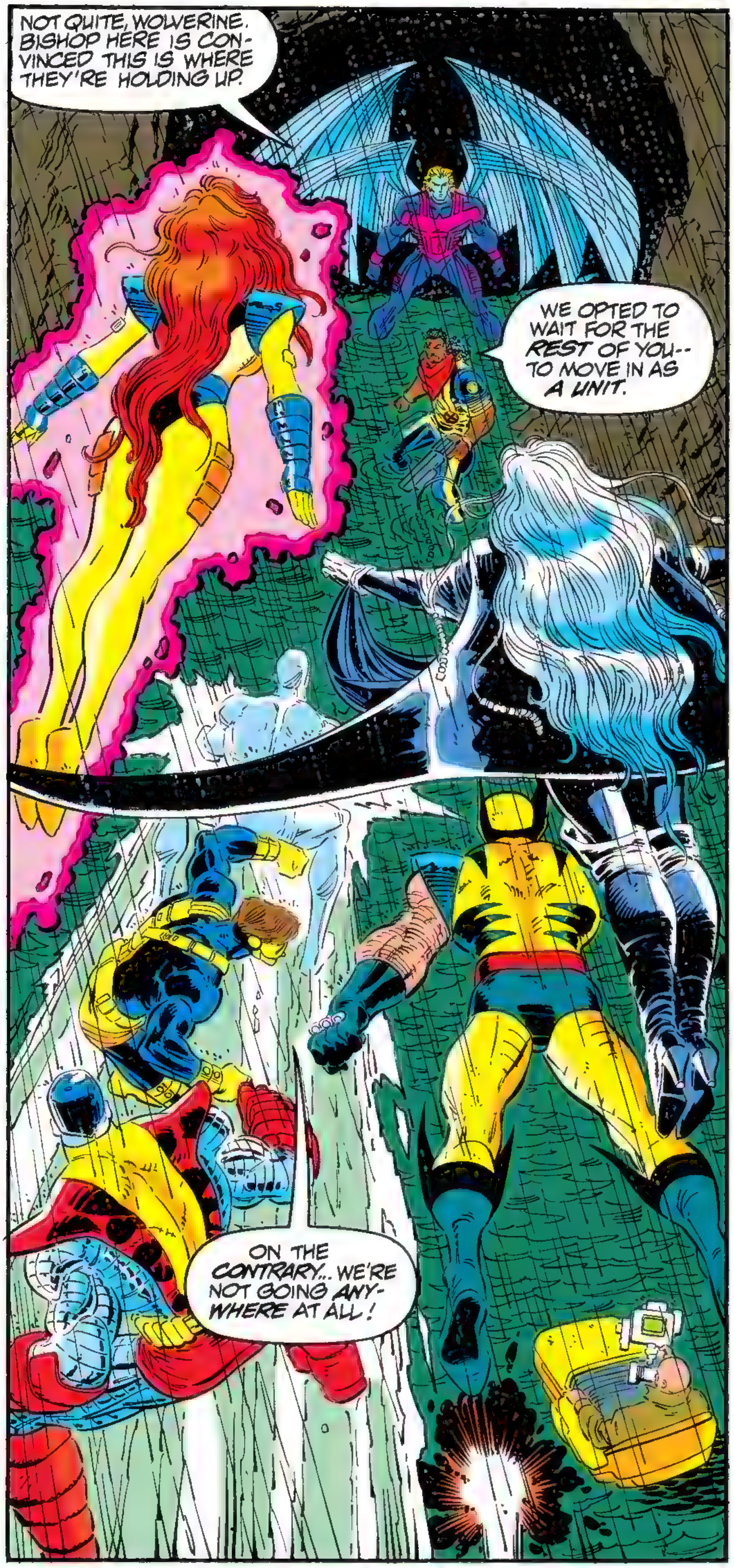

YOU KNEW HE WAS THERE, DIDN'T YOU ?!
YOU SET ME UP ! WHY?!
THE ANSWER SHOULD BE OBVIOUS, CORTEZ. ANYTHING TO KEEP THE GAME INTERESTING.
OTHER-WISE...
... WHY BOTHER ?

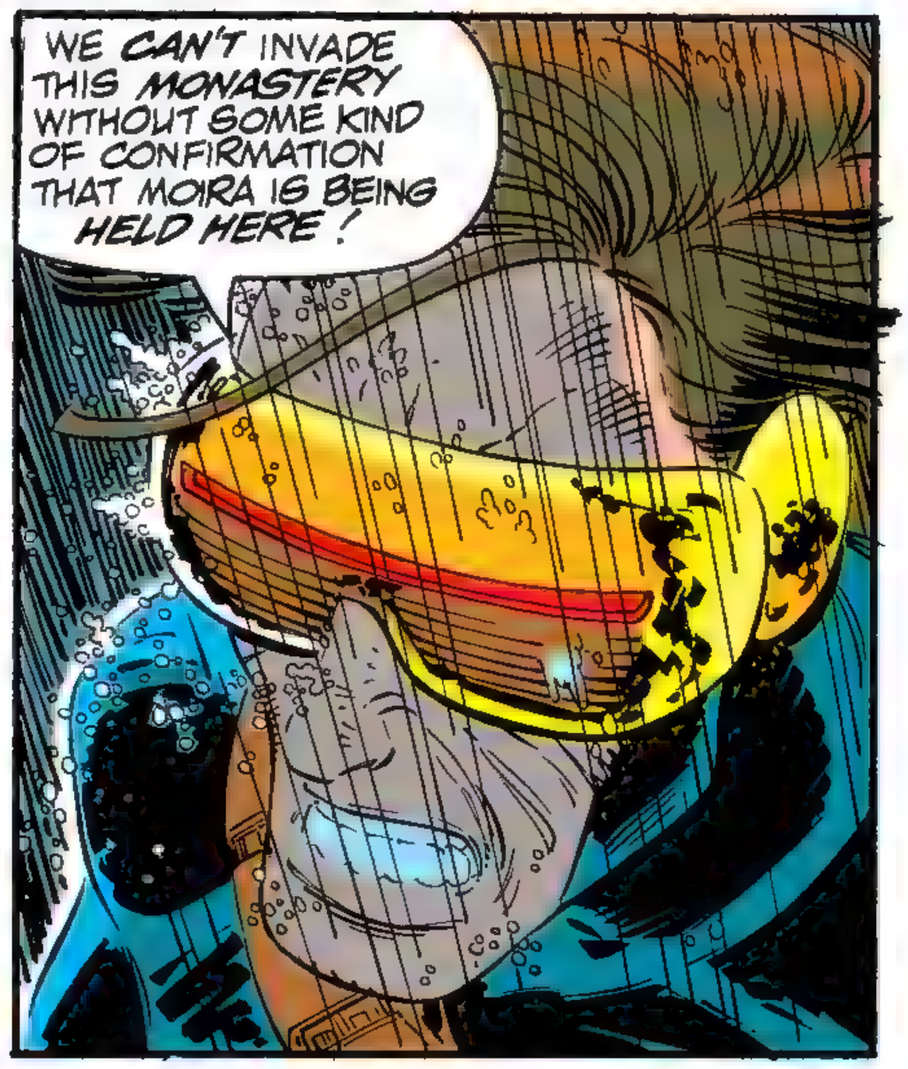

CORTEZ HAS THE MUTANT ABILITY--
--TO ENHANCE ANOTHER MUTANT'S POWER TO THE FURTHEST DEGREE.
I HAVE DARED MUCH--
--SACRIFICED EVERYTHING...
... ONLY TO SEE MY PLANS FRUSTRATED BY A CHILD!

--THE NEOPHYTE IS CAPABLE OF TRAVERSING GREAT DISTANCES THROUGH MASS...
...WITH CORTEZ'S UN-EXPECTED--UNWANTED "ASSISTANCE"...

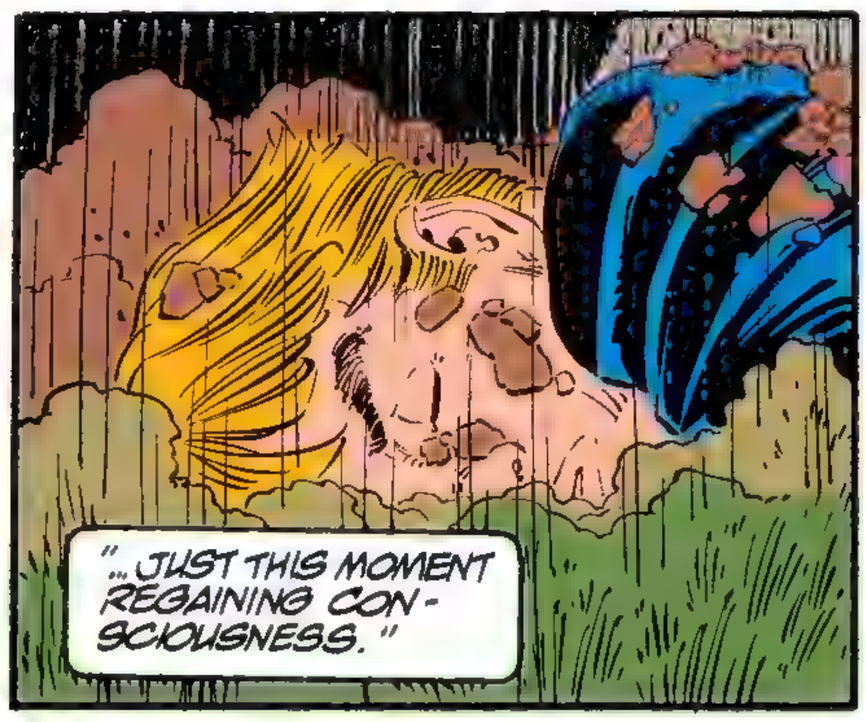

...THAT JOURNEY...
...COULD PROVE FATAL.
SPLOSH
AFTER EVERYTHING HE HAS HEARD THIS DAY--
--HIS ILLUSIONS, SHATTERED..
... HIS TRUST, BETRAYED--
--HE WOULD JUST AS SOON SURRENDER HIMSELF TO THIS DEADLY EMBRACE OF MUD AND WATER.

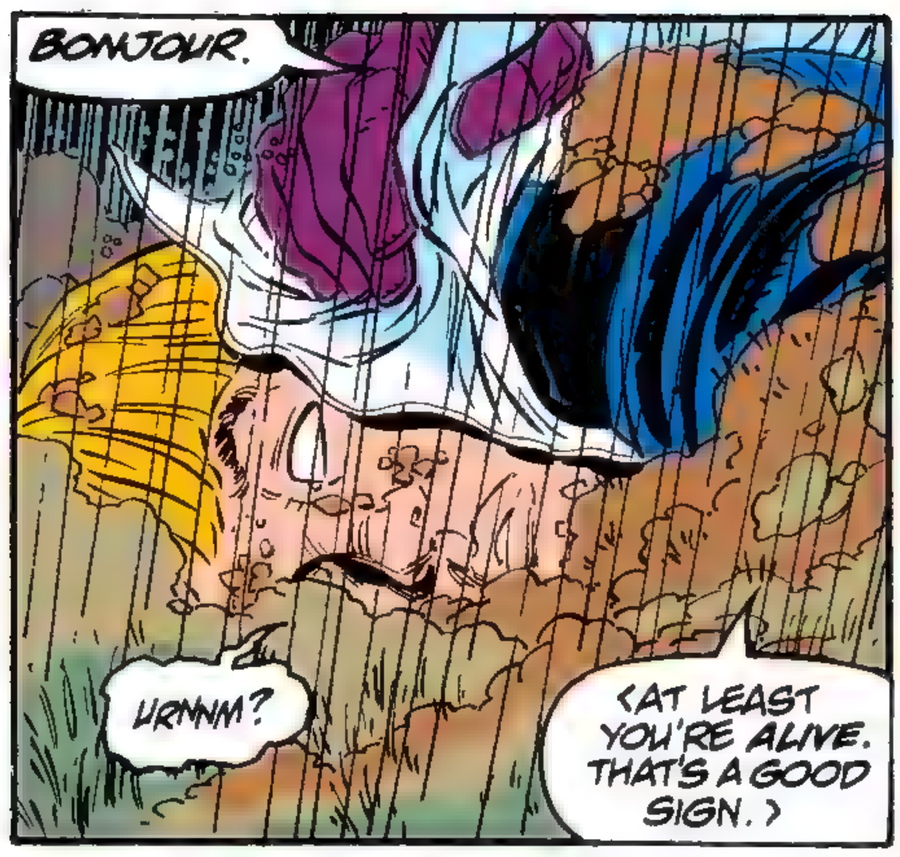

WHAT--YOU'RE THROWING A PARTY AND FORGOT TO INVITE THE ACOLYTES, BUB?

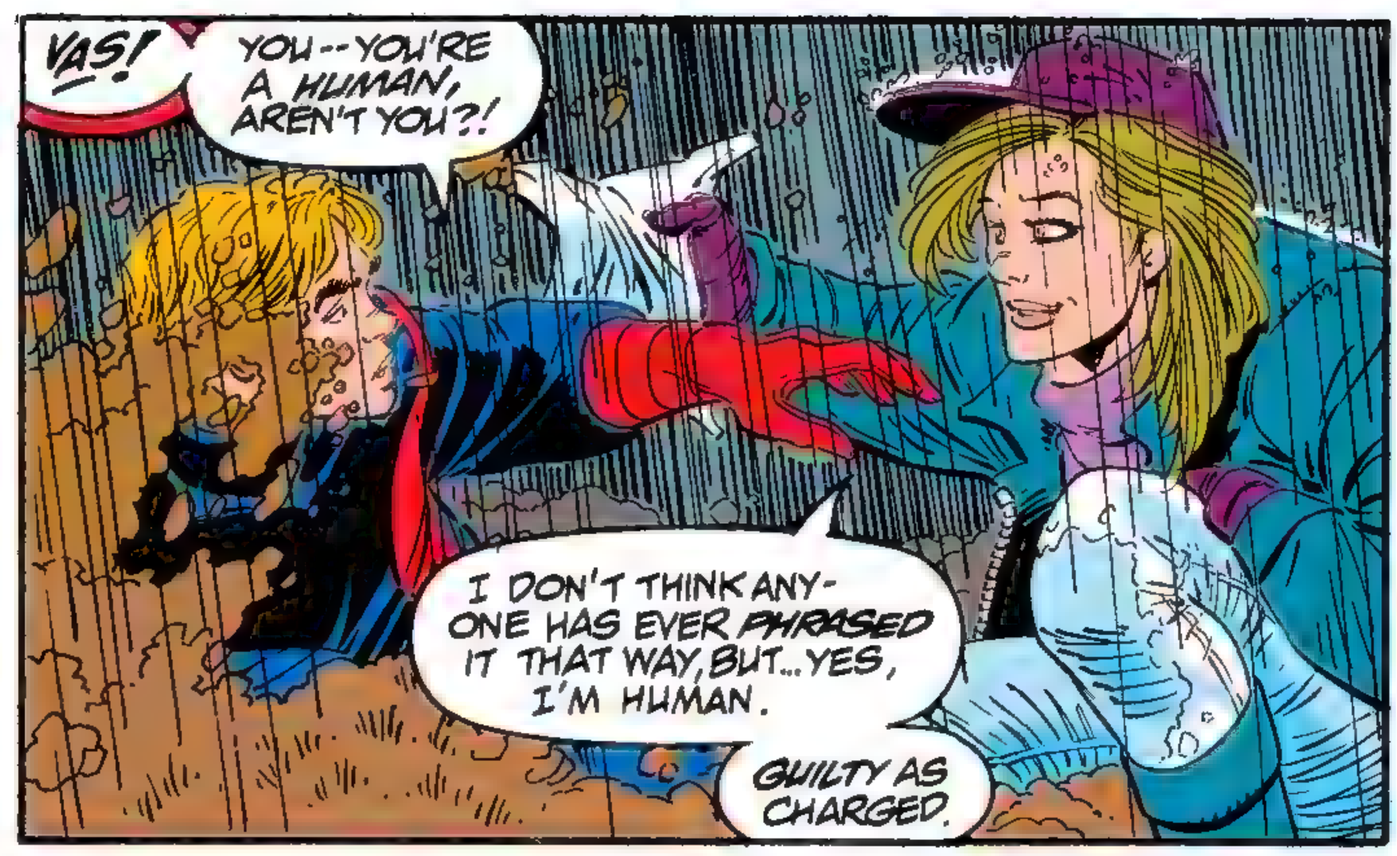

NOT QUITE, WOLVERINE. BISHOP HERE IS CONVINCED THIS IS WHERE THEY'RE HOLDING UP.
WE OPTED TO WAIT FOR THE REST OF YOU-- TO MOVE IN AS A UNIT.
ON THE CONTRARY... WE'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE AT ALL!

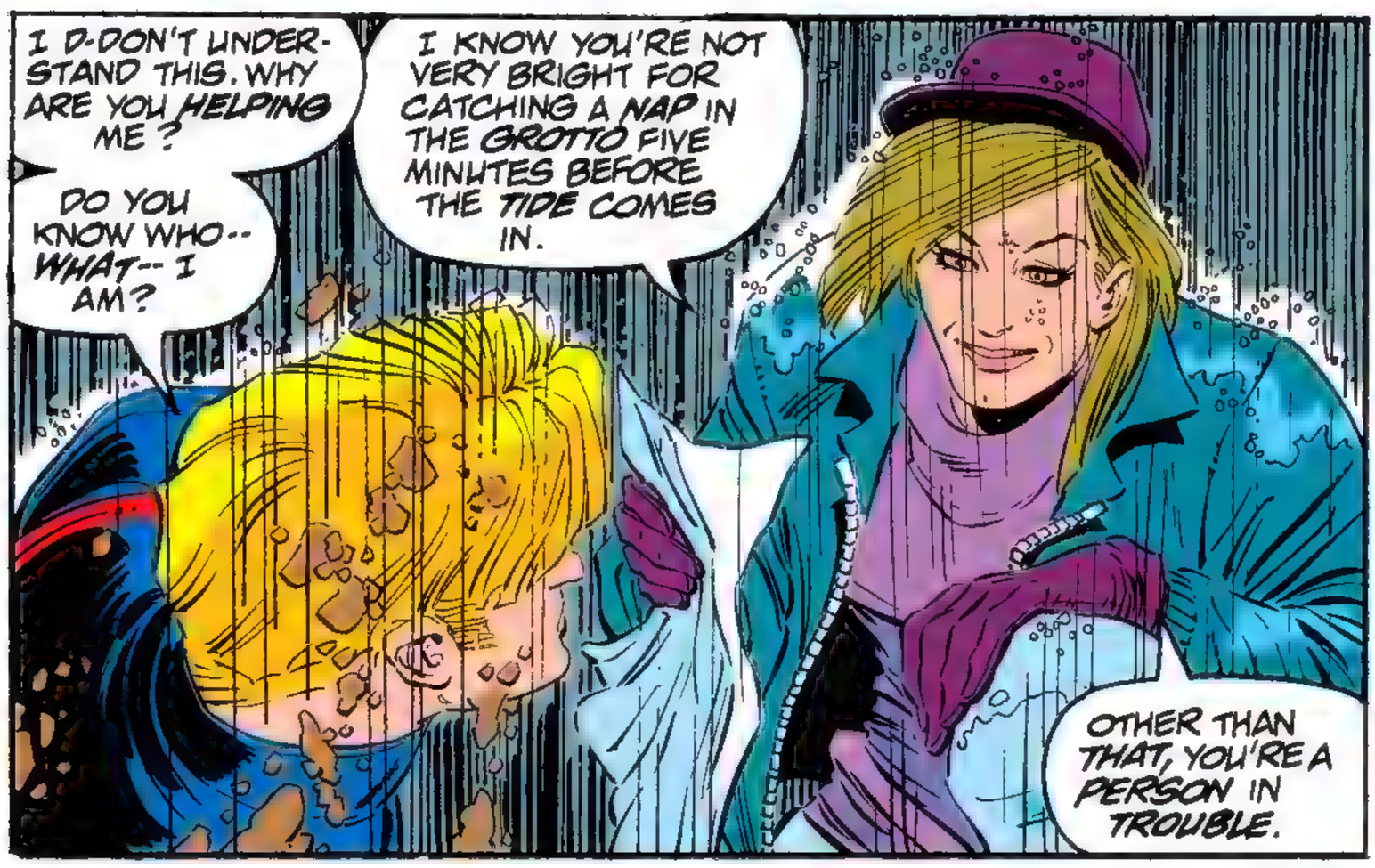

WE CAN'T INVADE THIS MONASTERY WITHOUT SOME KIND OF CONFIRMATION THAT MOIRA IS BEING HELD HERE!

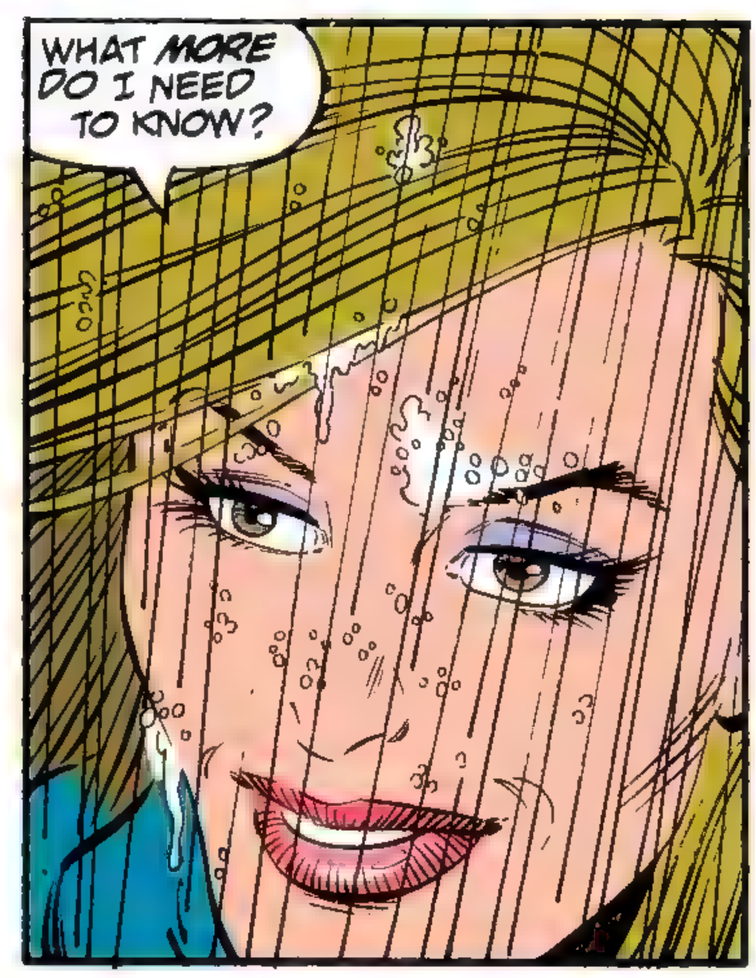
CYCLOPS, MUST I REMIND YOU I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GOLD TEAM? BISHOP'S INSTINCTS HAVE PROVEN--
--CORRECT, IT WOULD SEEM.
ping
CEREBRO HAS LOCATED AN UNIDENTIFIED MUTANT...


"...JUST THIS MOMENT REGAINING CONSCIOUSNESS."

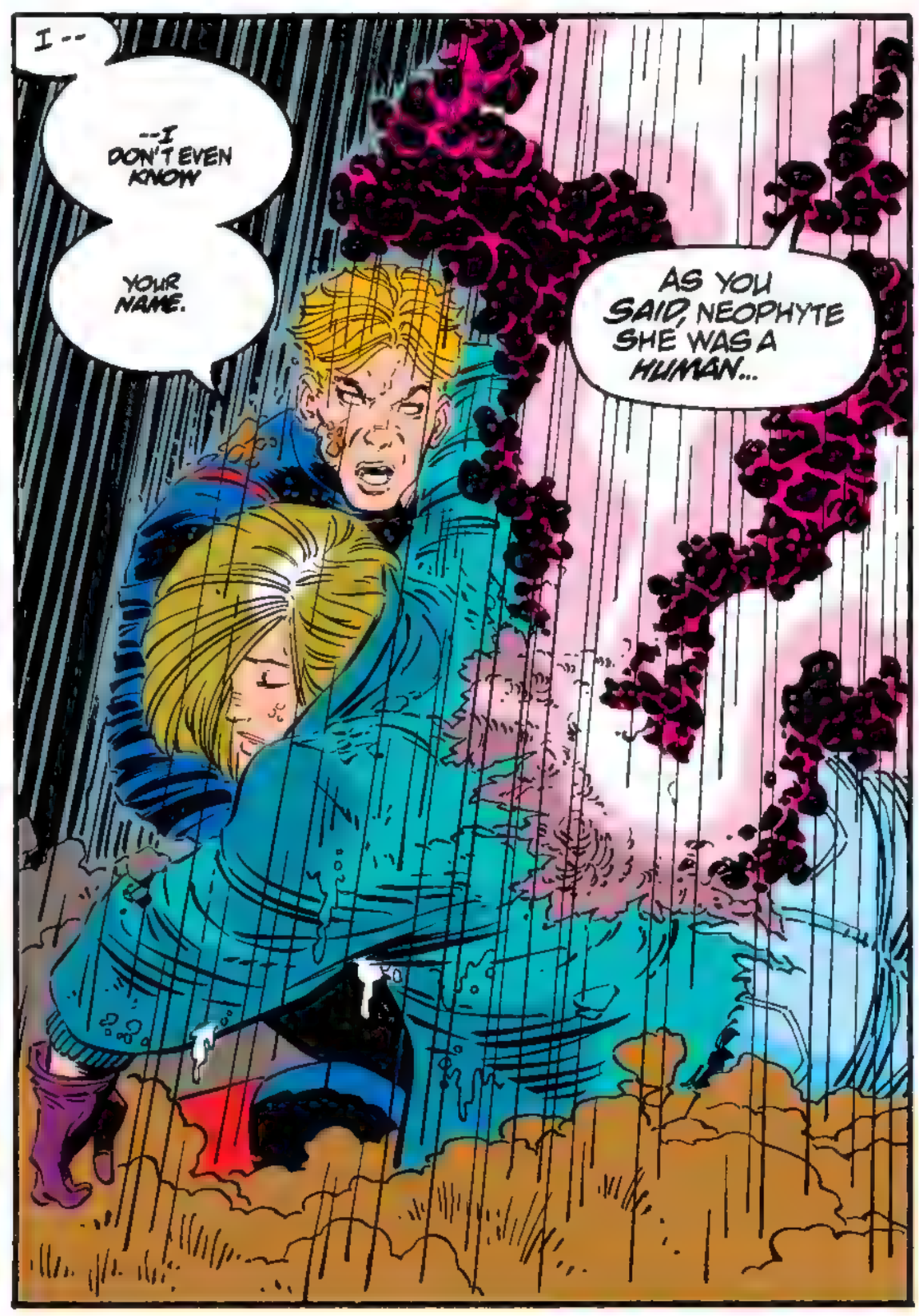

BONJOUR.
URNNM?
<AT LEAST YOU'RE ALIVE. THAT'S A GOOD SIGN.>

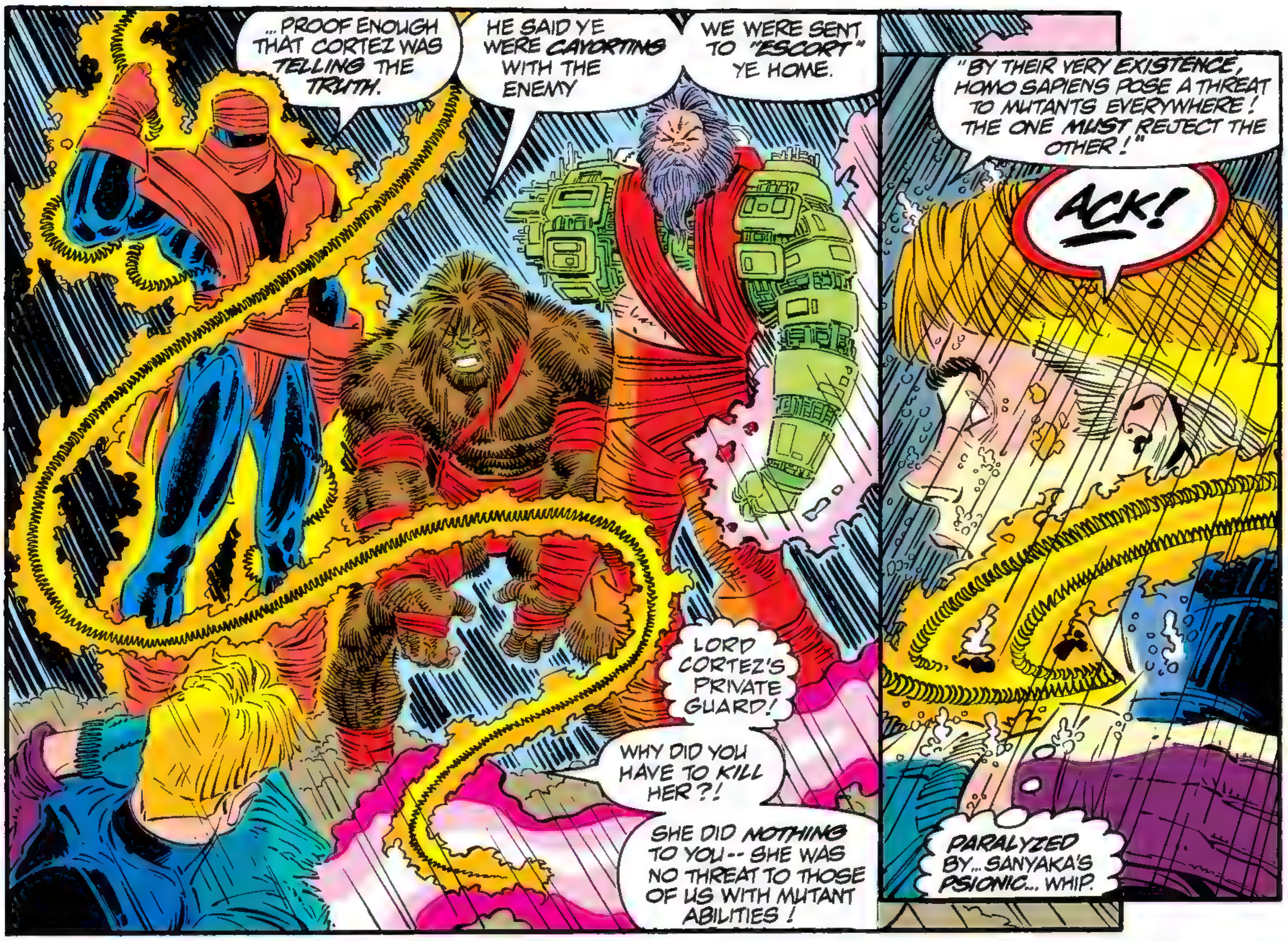

VAS!
YOU--YOU'RE A HUMAN, AREN'T YOU?!
I DON'T THINK ANYONE HAS EVER PHRASED IT THAT WAY, BUT...YES, I'M HUMAN.
GUILTY AS CHARGED.

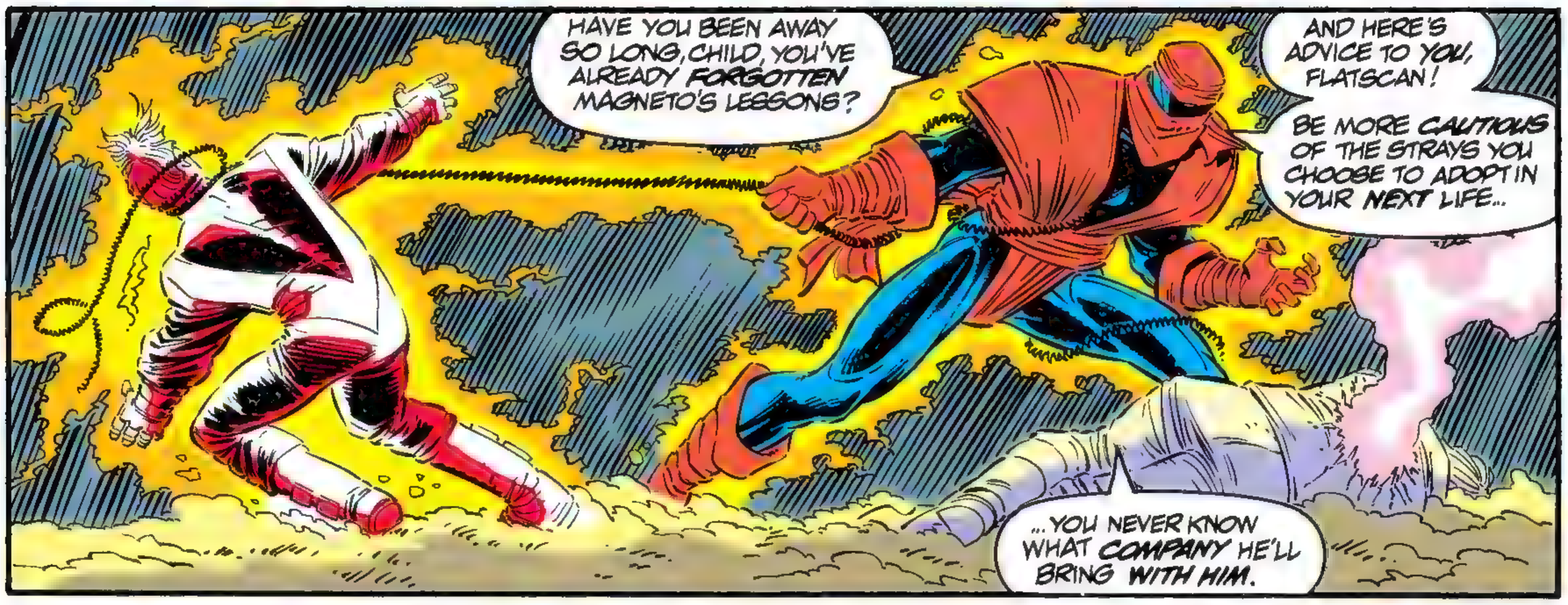

I D-DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS. WHY ARE YOU HELPING ME?
DO YOU KNOW WHO--WHAT--I AM?
I KNOW YOU'RE NOT VERY BRIGHT FOR CATCHING A NAP IN THE GROTTO FIVE MINUTES BEFORE THE TIDE COMES IN.
OTHER THAN THAT, YOU'RE A PERSON IN TROUBLE.

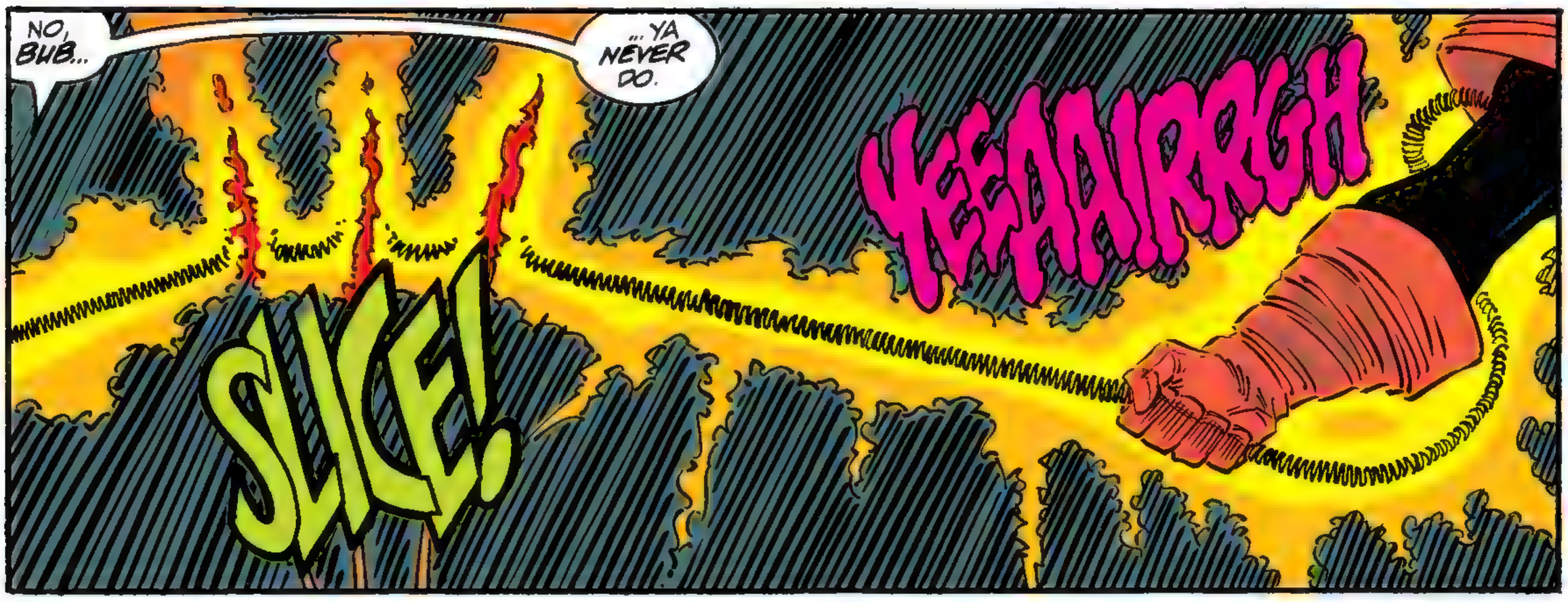

WHAT MORE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

NOW LET'S GET YOU--
FNZAK!
SHE'S DEAD BEFORE A SOUND CAN ESCAPE FROM WHAT WERE--
--UNTIL ONLY MOMENTS AGO--
--HER LUNGS.

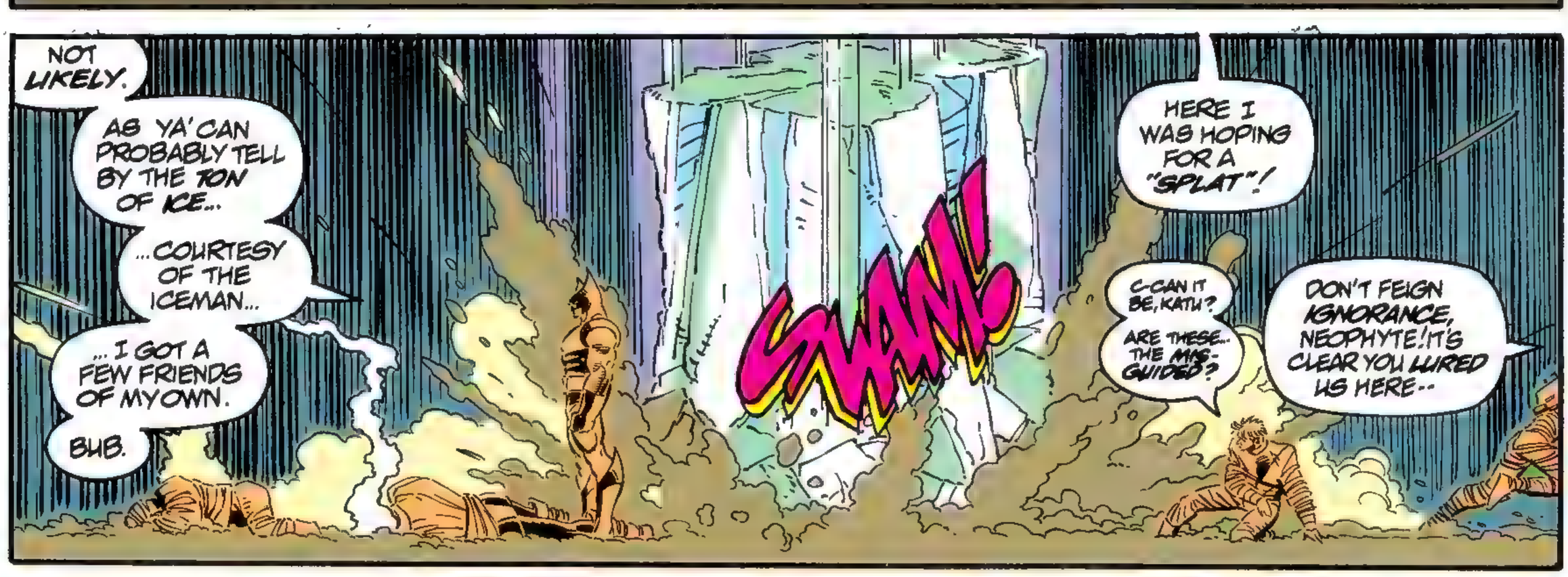

I--
--I DON'T EVEN KNOW
YOUR NAME.
AS YOU SAID, NEOPHYTE SHE WAS A HUMAN...

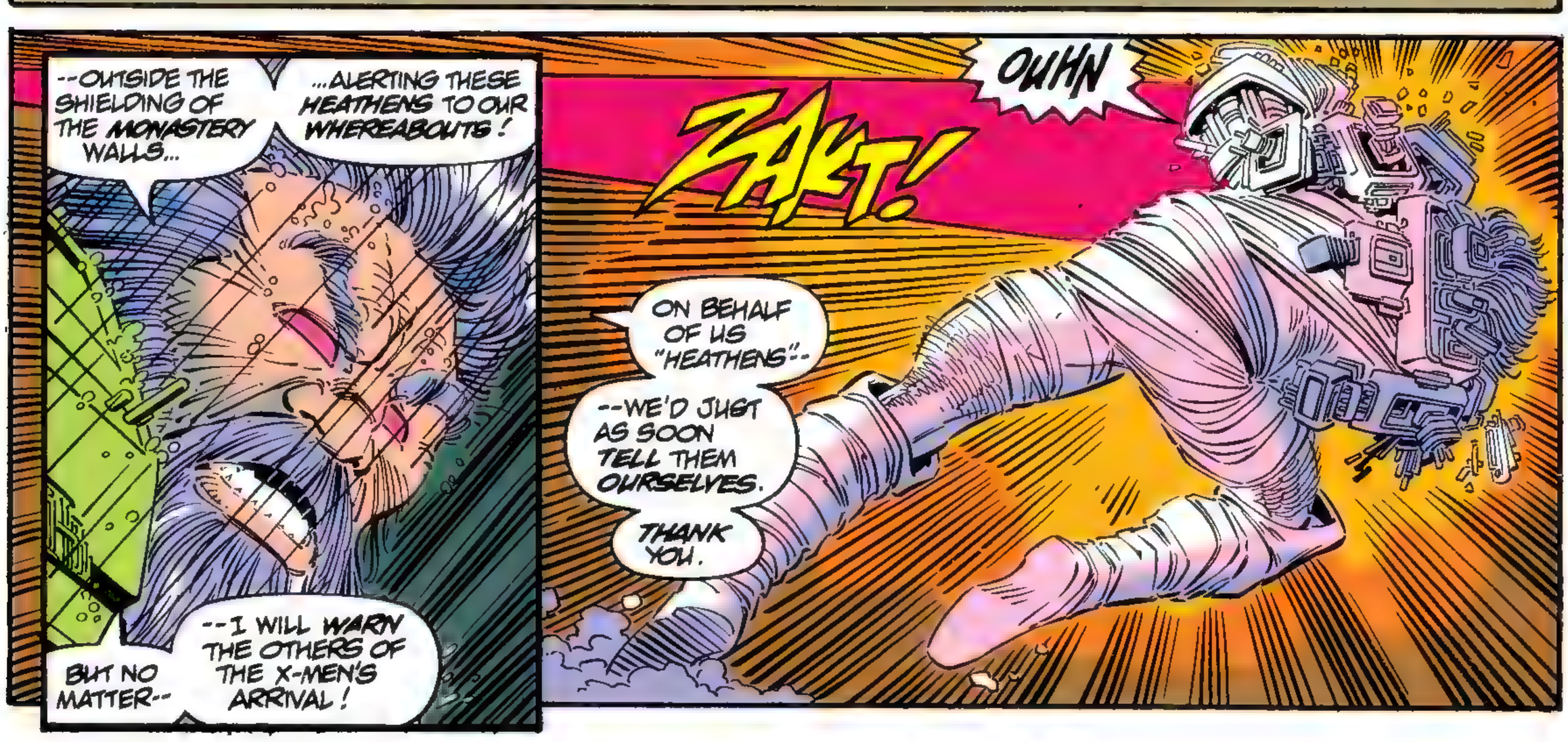

...PROOF ENOUGH THAT CORTEZ WAS TELLING THE TRUTH.
HE SAID YE WERE CAVORTING WITH THE ENEMY
WE WERE SENT TO "ESCORT" YE HOME.
"BY THEIR VERY EXISTENCE, HOMO SAPIENS POSE A THREAT TO MUTANTS EVERYWHERE! THE ONE MUST REJECT THE OTHER!"
ACK!
LORD CORTEZ'S PRIVATE GUARD!
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO KILL HER?!
SHE DID NOTHING TO YOU -- SHE WAS NO THREAT TO THOSE OF US WITH MUTANT ABILITIES!
PARALYZED BY... SANYAKA'S PSIONIC... WHIP.

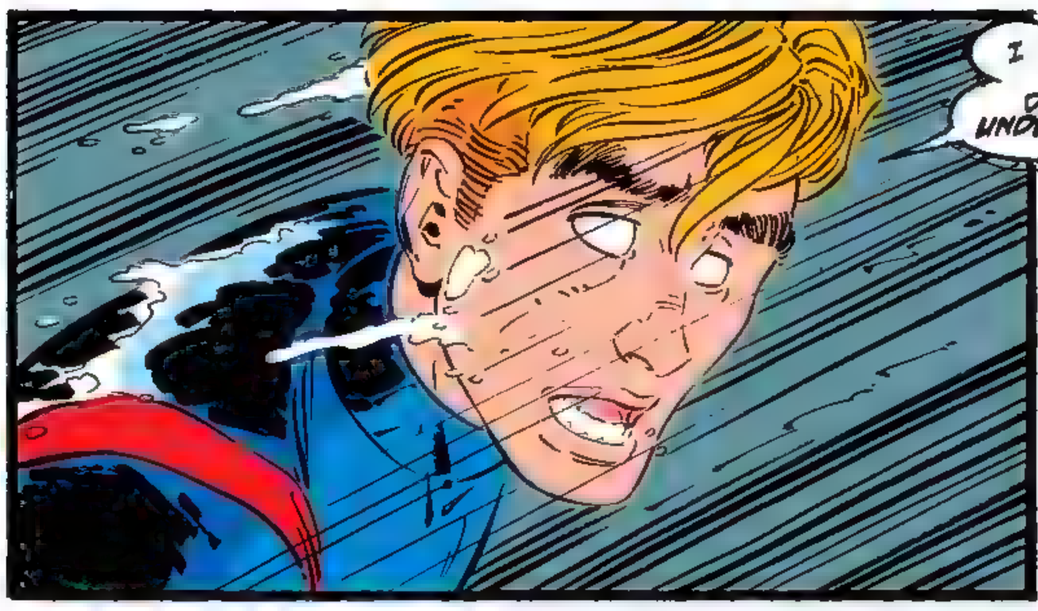

HAVE YOU BEEN AWAY SO LONG, CHILD, YOU'VE ALREADY FORGOTTEN MAGNETO'S LESSONS?
AND HERE'S ADVICE TO YOU, FLATSCAN!
BE MORE CAUTIOUS OF THE STRAYS YOU CHOOSE TO ADOPT IN YOUR NEXT LIFE...
...YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT COMPANY HE'LL BRING WITH HIM.


NO, BUB...
...YA NEVER DO.
SLICE!
YEEAAIRRGH!

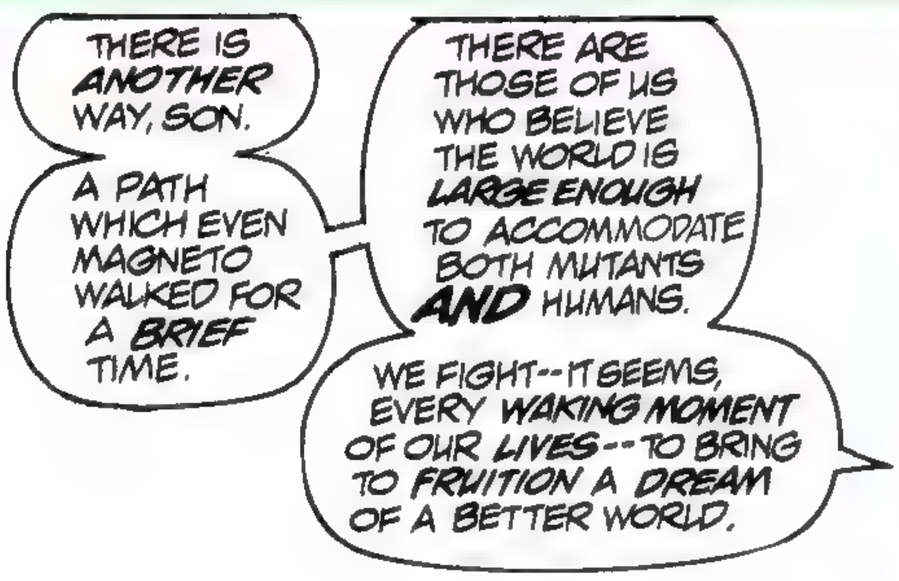
Whoops.
GUESS SEVERIN' YOUR PSIONIC WHIP CAUSED ENOUGH FEEDBACK TO TEMORARILY FRY YOUR BRAIN.
HOW EMBARRASSING.
YE LOUSY TRAITOR! SANYAKA WAS A DEVOTED FOLLOWER OF THE CAUSE--
OLE' SPOOR WILL HAVE YE REGRETTIN' WHAT FOR YE DID T'ME FRIEND!
--YE HAVE NO RIGHT T'BE MOCKIN' THE MAN WHILE HE'S DOWN.

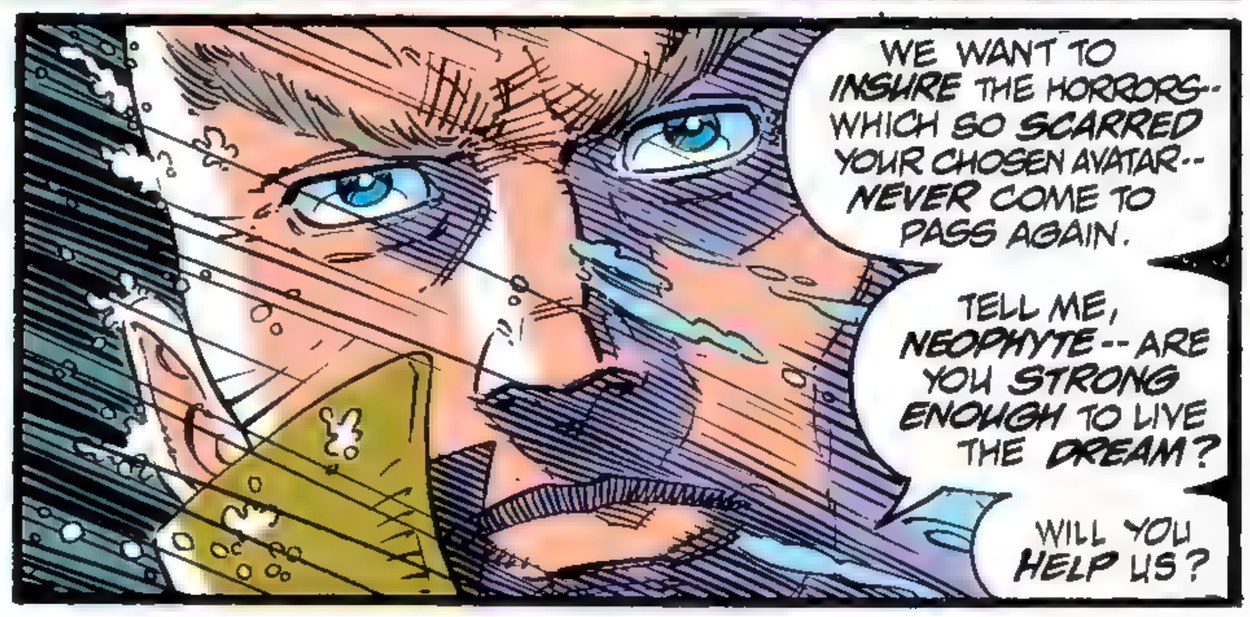

NOT LIKELY.
AS YA' CAN PROBABLY TELL BY THE TON OF ICE...
...COURTESY OF THE ICEMAN...
...I GOT A FEW FRIENDS OF MY OWN.
BUB.
SWANG
HERE I WAS HOPING FOR A "SPLAT"!
C-CAN IT BE, KATU?
ARE THESE... THE MIS-GUIDED?
DON'T FEIGN IGNORANCE, NEOPHYTE! IT'S CLEAR YOU LURED US HERE--


--OUTSIDE THE SHIELDING OF THE MONASTERY WALLS...
...ALERTING THESE HEATHENS TO OUR WHEREABOUTS!
BUT NO MATTER--
--I WILL WARN THE OTHERS OF THE X-MEN'S ARRIVAL!
ZAPT!
OWHN
ON BEHALF OF US "HEATHENS"--
--WE'D JUST AS SOON TELL THEM OURSELVES.
THANK YOU.



I READ OF THE DEATH CAMPS IN WHICH MAGNUS WAS RAISED.
I CAN NOT--
WILL NOT--
BELIEVE THE ONLY THING HE LEFT TO US, HIS "CHILDREN"...
...WAS MORE OF THE SAME UNREASONING HATRED THAT CAUSED THE SLAUGHTER OF HIS FAMILY.
I'VE DEDICATED MY LIFE TO THE MAN.
HIS LIFE MUST BE... MORE.. THAN THIS.





JUST OUTSIDE THE MONASTERY WALLS...?! HOW COULD THEY'VE GOTTEN THIS CLOSE WITHOUT US KNOWING?!

MY SCANNING ABILITY WAS MUFFLED BY THE CLOAKING DEVICE WHICH SHIELDS THIS SACRED PLACE!

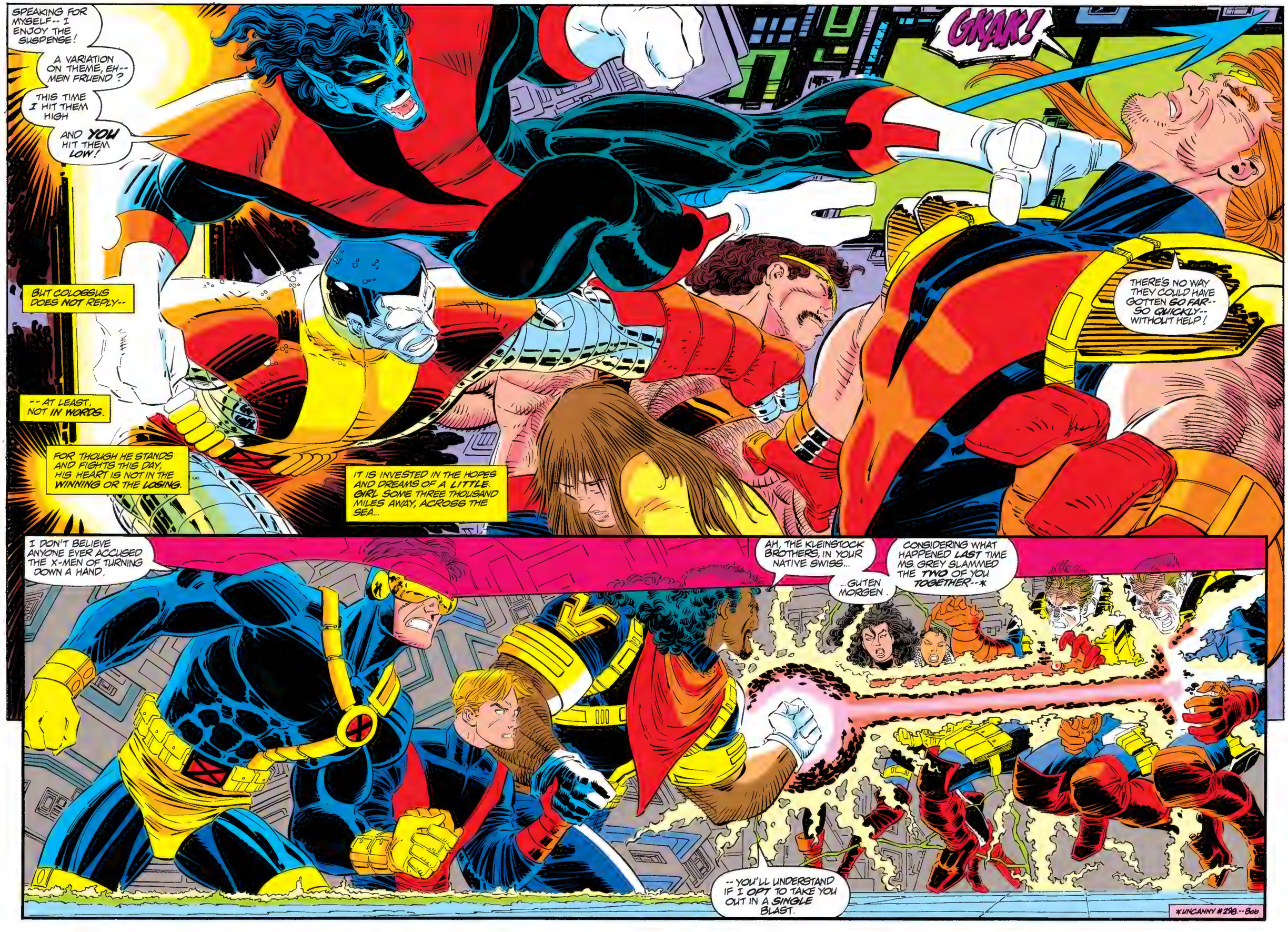
THEY ARE SO NEAR, I CAN SENSE THEIR PRESENCE... NINE IN ALL!

THEN THE TIME HAS COME MY BRETHREN... THE FINAL BATTLE IN OUR HOLY WAR TO CLAIM THIS WORLD IN MAGNUS' NAME!

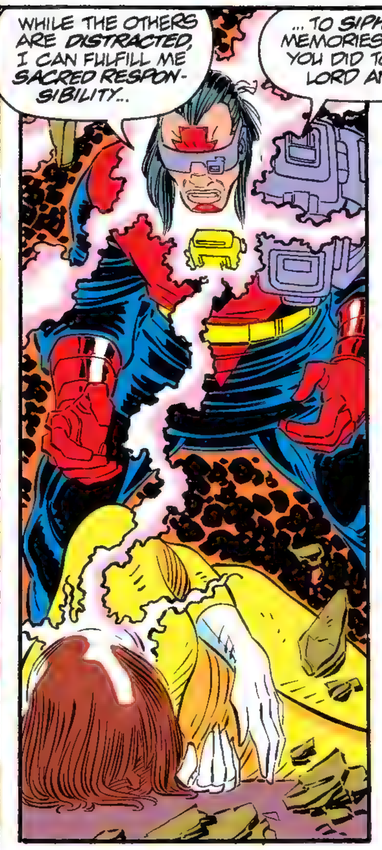
BUT LET THE ACOLYTES DRAW FIRST BLOOD. BRING ME THE WOMAN, JAYITZ!

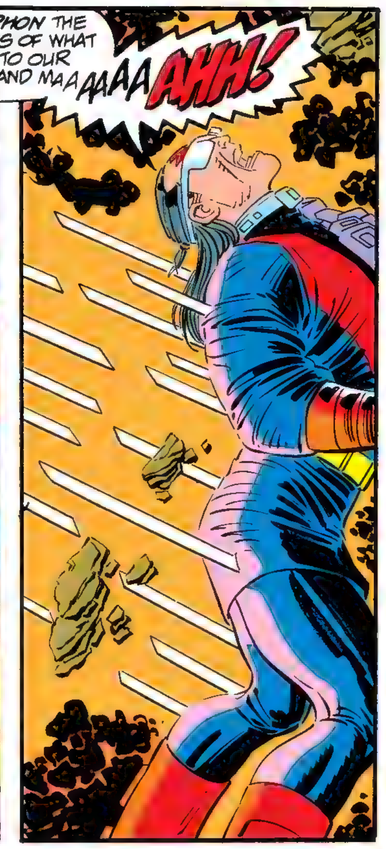
IF THE NEOPHYTE REVEALS MY SECRET-- BETRAYS ME--WORD OF MY ACTIONS WILL SURELY TURN MY FOLLOWERS AGAINST ME!

MY ONLY HOPE--TO PREVENT THE X-MEN FROM CONVINCING THE ACOLYTES OF MY HAND IN MAGNETO'S DEATH-- IS TO RAISE THE STAKES.


SPEAKING FOR MYSELF-- I ENJOY THE SUSPENSE!
A VARIATION ON THEME, EH-- MEIN FRUEND?
THIS TIME I HIT THEM HIGH
AND YOU HIT THEM LOW!
GRAK!
BUT COLOSSUS DOES NOT REPLY--
-- AT LEAST, NOT IN WORDS.
FOR THOUGH HE STANDS AND FIGHTS THIS DAY, HIS HEART IS NOT IN THE WINNING OR THE LOSING.
IT IS INVESTED IN THE HOPES AND DREAMS OF A LITTLE GIRL SOME THREE THOUSAND MILES AWAY, ACROSS THE SEA...
THERE'S NO WAY THEY COULD HAVE GOTTEN SO FAR-- SO QUICKLY-- WITHOUT HELP!
I DON'T BELIEVE ANYONE EVER ACCUSED THE X-MEN OF TURNING DOWN A HAND.
AH, THE KLEINSTOCK BROTHERS, IN YOUR NATIVE SWISS...
...GUTEN MORGEN.
CONSIDERING WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME MS. GREY SLAMMED THE TWO OF YOU TOGETHER--*
-- YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IF I OPT TO TAKE YOU OUT IN A SINGLE BLAST.
*UNCANNY #298.--Bob

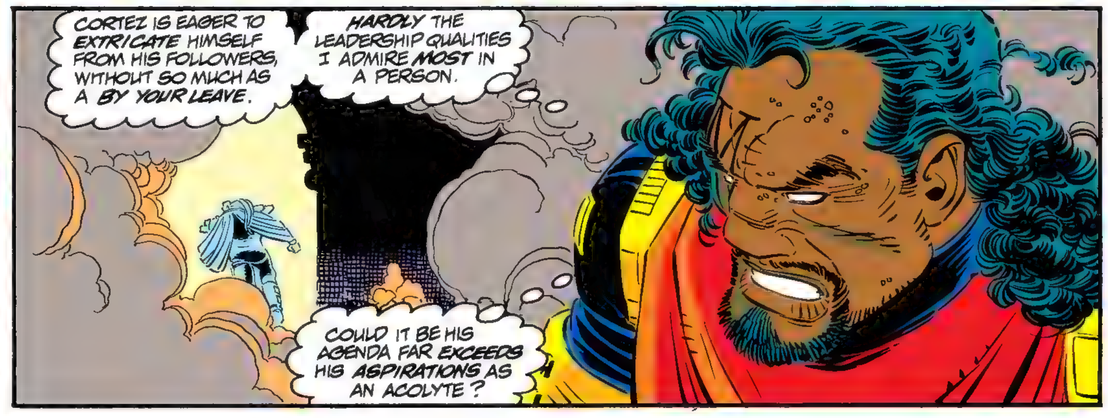
LISTEN TO YOU, BISHOP-- YOU FINALLY GET TO DRAW ON YOUR PAST EXPERIENCES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY--
--AND SUDDENLY YOU'RE AN EXPERT ON ALL THINGS ACOLYTAL.
"ACOLYTAL", SNOWBALL?
HANK ASSURED ME IT WAS A WORD.
HANK LIED!
GUYS-- PLEASE!
JEAN IS CORRECT. TOTAL CONCENTRATION IS PARAMOUNT.
WE HAVE NEVER FACED A GROUP THIS FOCUSED-- THIS FANATIC.
THEY SEEM MORE THAN WILLING TO DIE FOR THEIR CAUSE.
WORKS OUT FINE-- I'M MORE THAN WILLIN' TO ACCOMODATE 'EM!
BAMF
THE CHILD--?!
HE'S DONE HIS PART-- LET HIM GO!

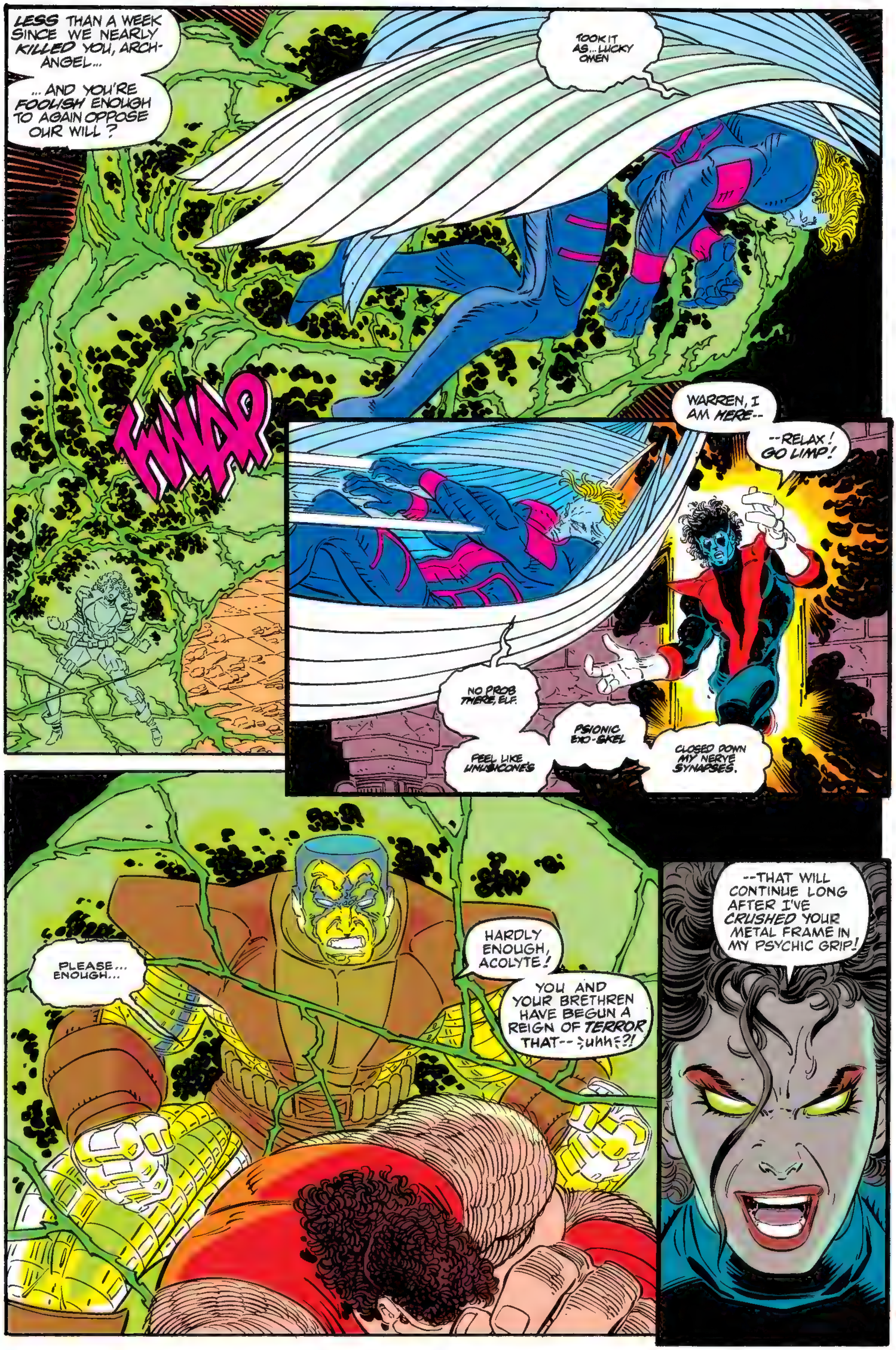

WHILE THE OTHERS ARE DISTRACTED, I CAN FULFILL ME SACRED RESPONSIBILITY...


... TO SIPHON THE MEMORIES OF WHAT YOU DID TO OUR LORD AND MAA
AAAA AHH!

THE DOCTOR HAS BEEN THROUGH ENOUGH...
...LEAVE HER ALONE.
BUT MILAN CANNOT HEAR WARREN'S WORDS OVER THE SOUNDS OF HIS OWN SCREAM!

SIMILARLY, THE SOUND OF SHATTERING GLASS--
-- JOINS THE CACAPHONY WHICH ROCKS THIS ANCIENT BUILDING TO ITS CORE!
AS THE BANK OF MONITORS EXPLODES, THE INFORMATION THE MUTANT GATHERED--
-- THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MOIRA MACTAGGERT...
... IS LOST TO THE ACOLYTES, FOREVER!


CORTEZ IS EAGER TO EXTRICATE HIMSELF FROM HIS FOLLOWERS, WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A BY YOUR LEAVE.
HARDLY THE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES I ADMIRE MOST IN A PERSON.
COULD IT BE HIS AGENDA FAR EXCEEDS HIS ASPIRATIONS AS AN ACOLYTE?

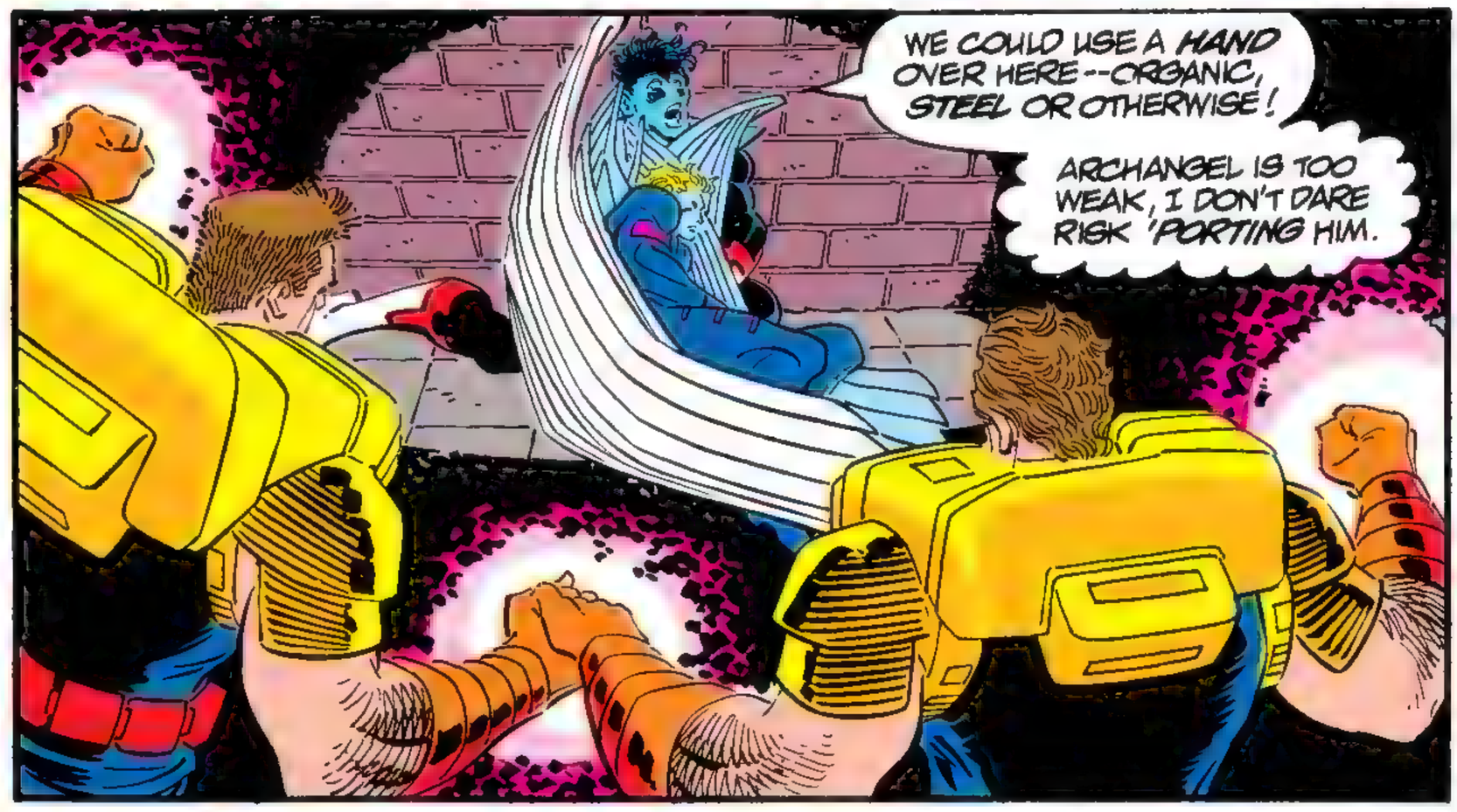

LESS THAN A WEEK SINCE WE NEARLY KILLED YOU, ARCH-ANGEL...
... AND YOU'RE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO AGAIN OPPOSE OUR WILL ?
TOOK IT AS... LUCKY OMEN
FWAP
WARREN, I AM HERE--
--RELAX ! GO LIMP !
NO PROB THERE, ELF.
PSIONIC EXO-SKEL
FEEL LIKE UNUSICONE'S
CLOSED DOWN MY NERVE SYNAPSES.
PLEASE... ENOUGH...
HARDLY ENOUGH, ACOLYTE !
YOU AND YOUR BRETHREN HAVE BEGUN A REIGN OF TERROR THAT-- ;uhh=?!
--THAT WILL CONTINUE LONG AFTER I'VE CRUSHED YOUR METAL FRAME IN MY PSYCHIC GRIP !

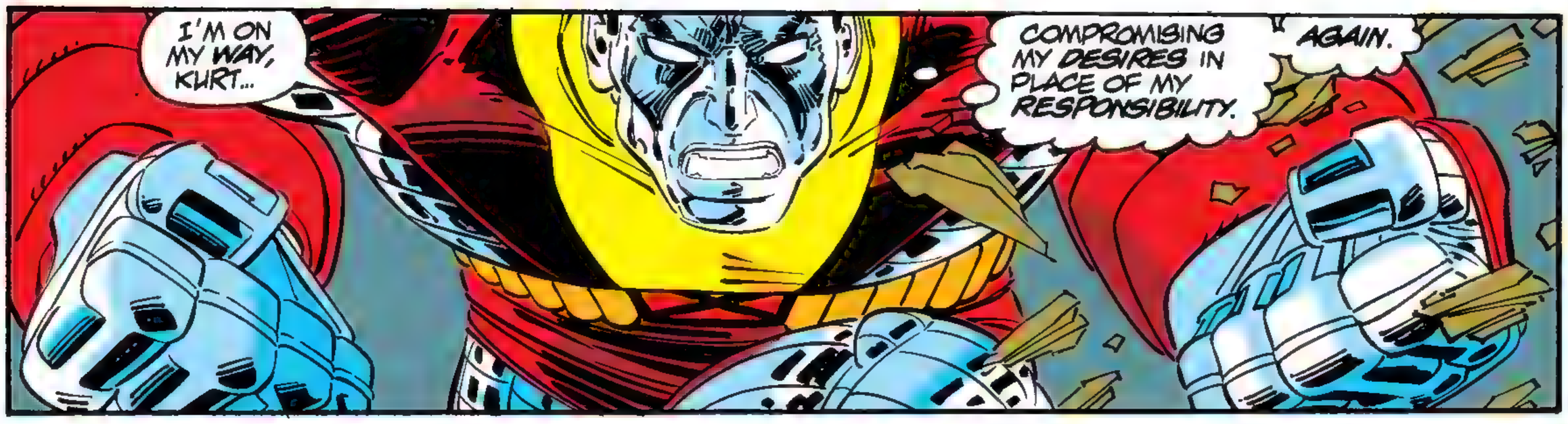
I'M AFRAID YOU ARE AS *SHORT* ON *POWER*--

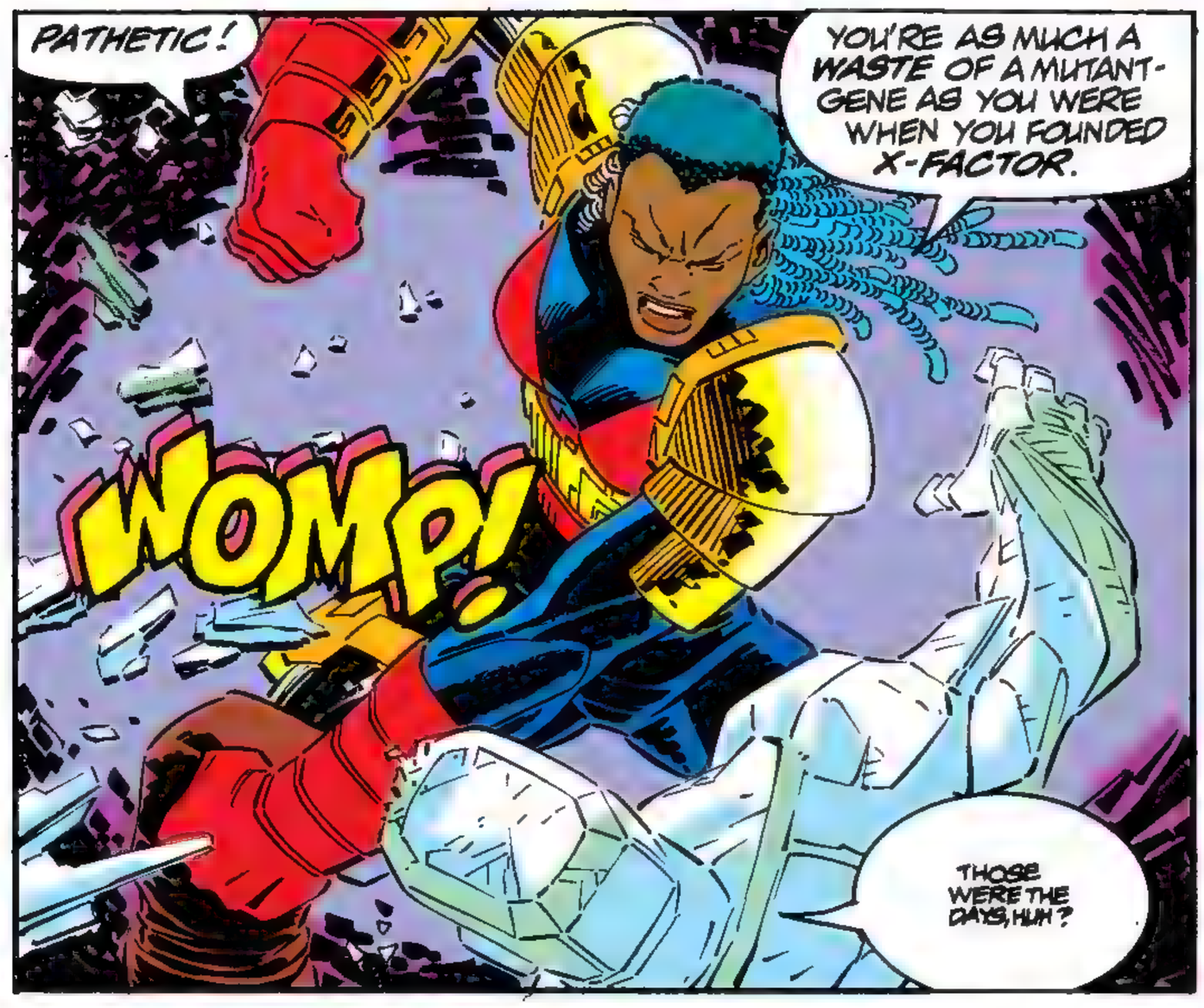
--AS YOU ARE ON *COMPASSION*, *UNUSCIONE*.

AARGH!

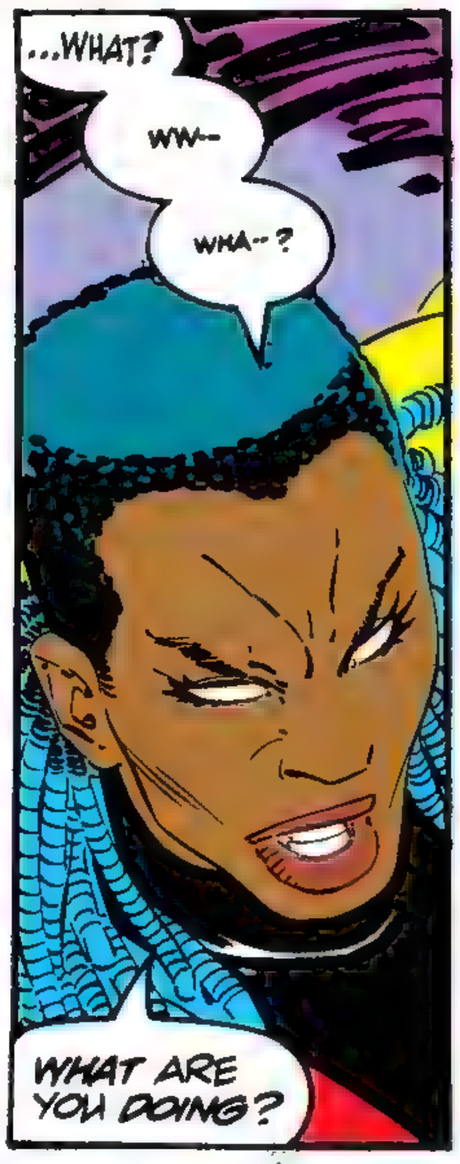
PERHAPS I SHOULD SHOW *YOU* THE SAME MERCY YOU PREPARED TO SHOWER UPON THE *CHILDREN* OF MIDDLEBOROUGH... ?

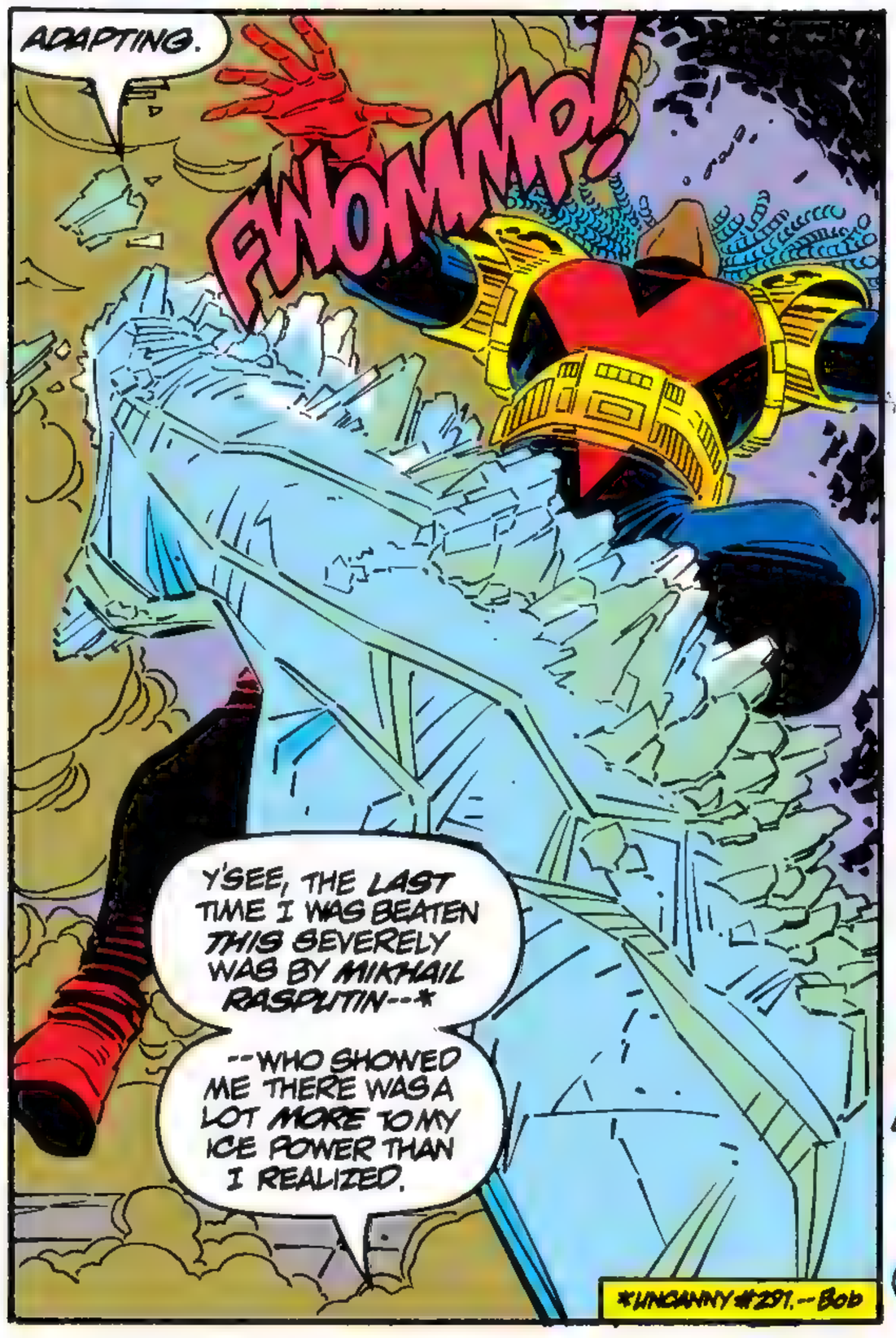


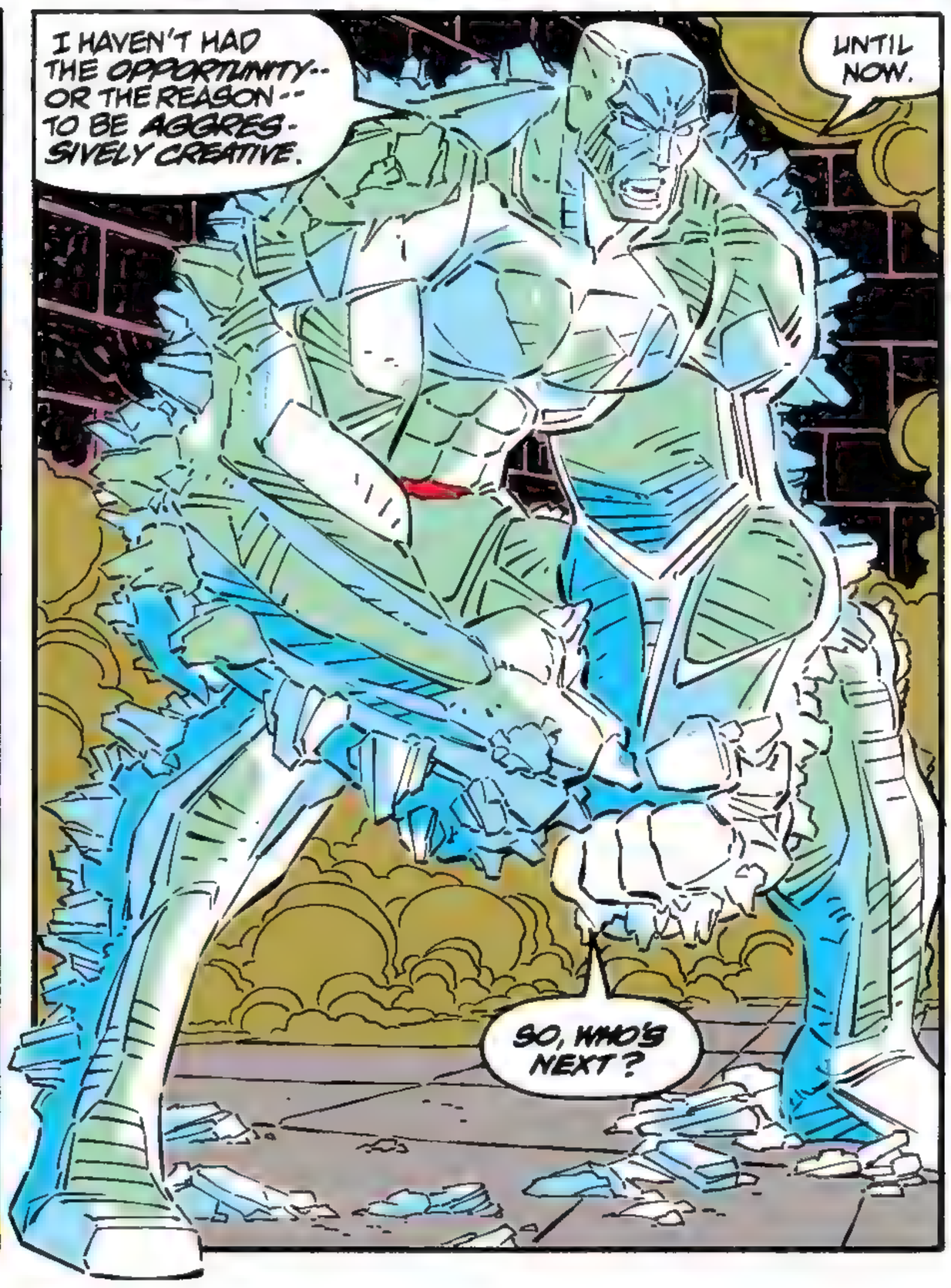

I'M ON MY WAY, KURT...
COMPROMISING MY DESIRES IN PLACE OF MY RESPONSIBILITY.
AGAIN.

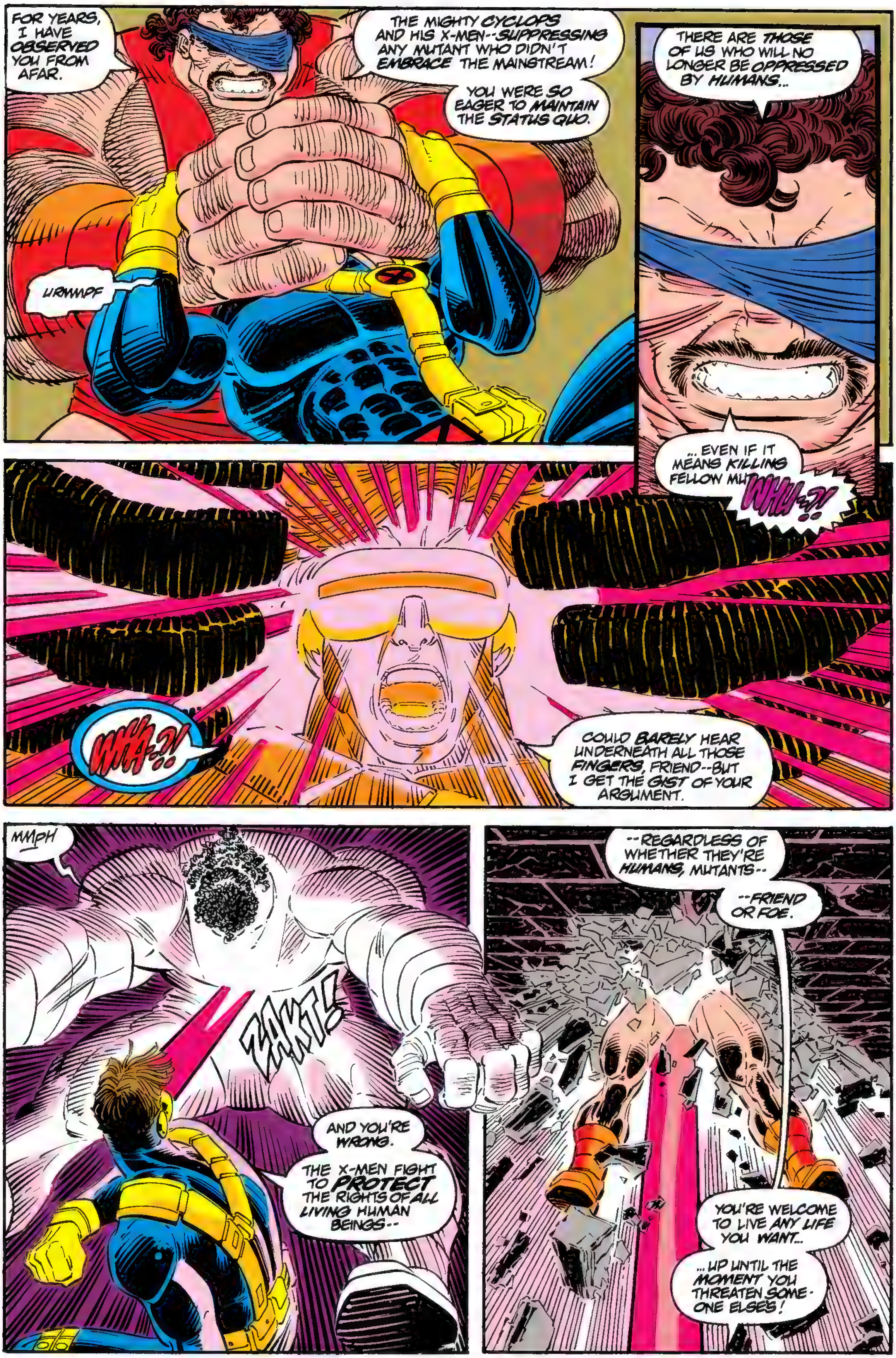

PATHETIC!
YOU'RE AS MUCH A WASTE OF A MUTANT-GENE AS YOU WERE WHEN YOU FOUNDED X-FACTOR.
WOMP!
THOSE WERE THE DAYS, HUH?

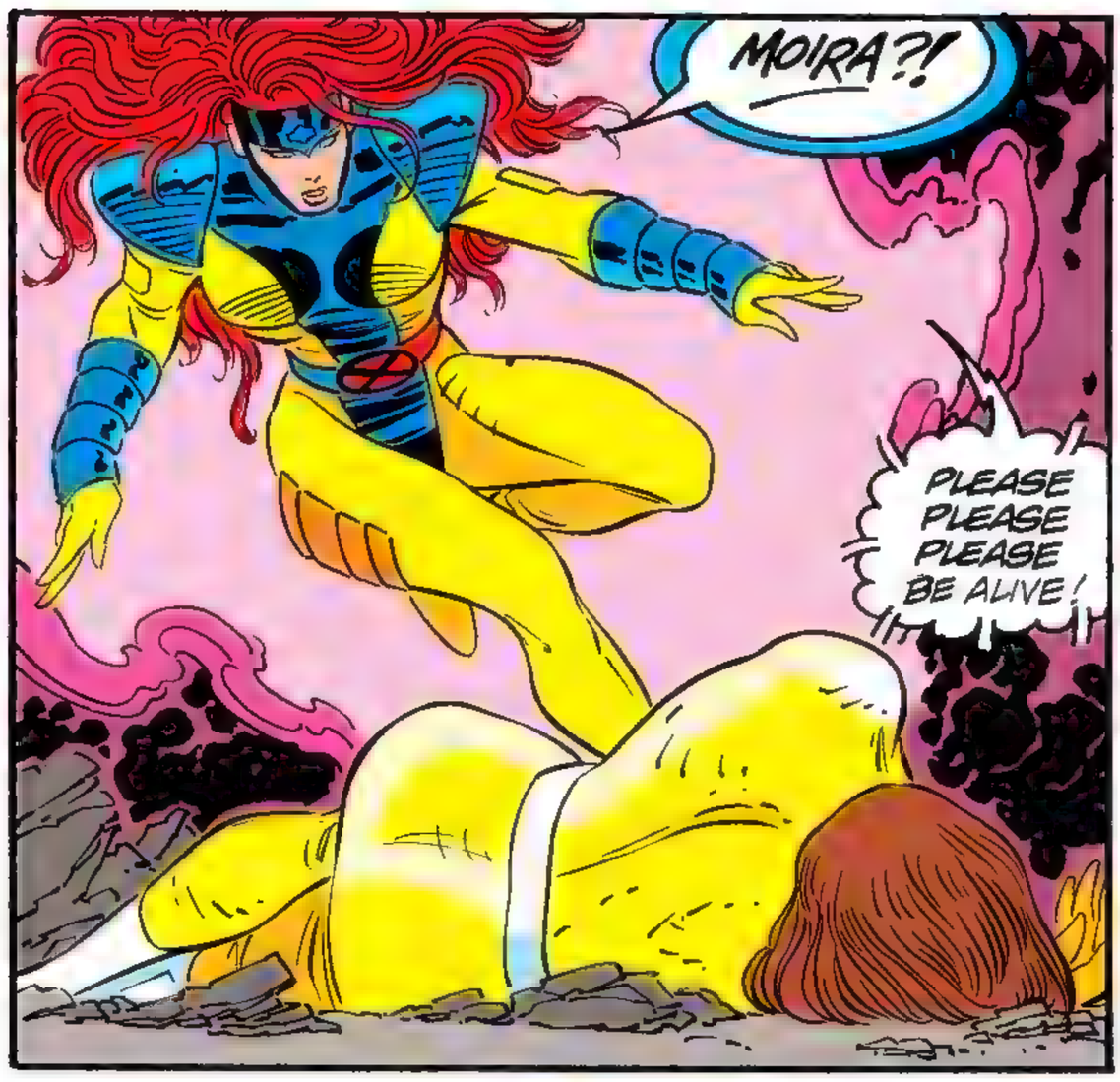
I, ON THE OTHER HAND, AM STRONGER!
I FOUND ACCEPTANCE...

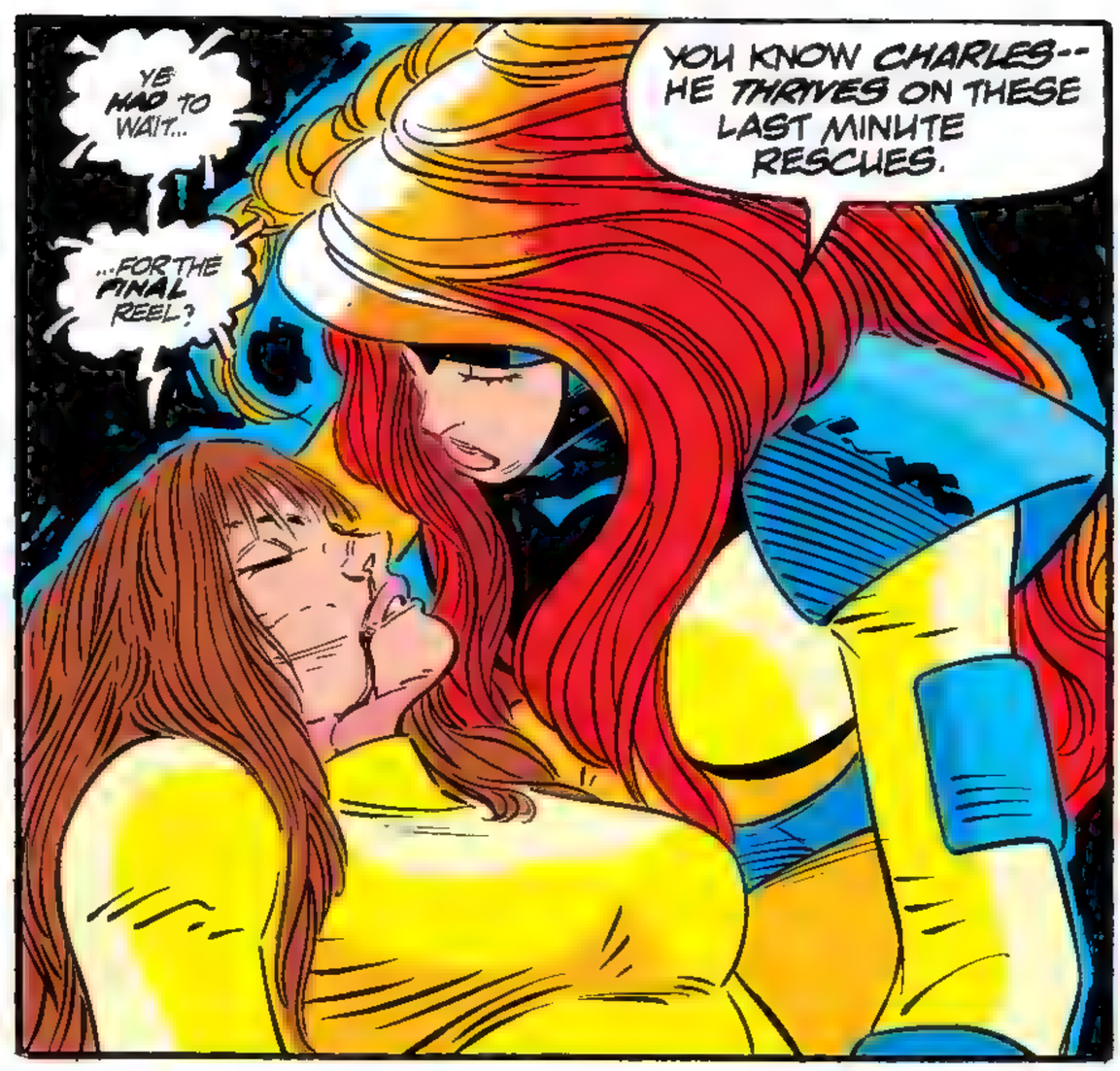

...WHAT?
WW--
WHA--?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

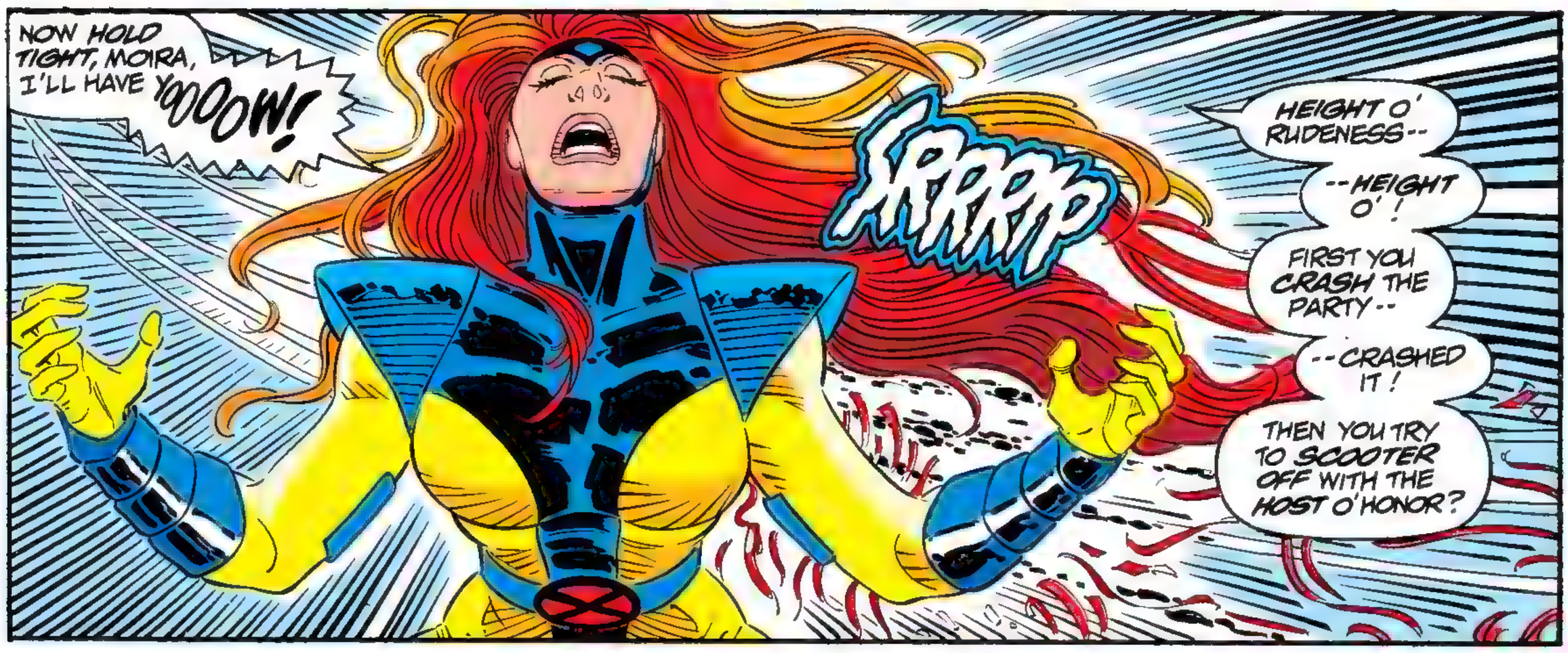

ADAPTING.
FWOMMMP!
Y'SEE, THE LAST TIME I WAS BEATEN THIS SEVERELY WAS BY MIKHAIL RASPUTIN--*
--WHO SHOWED ME THERE WAS A LOT MORE TO MY ICE POWER THAN I REALIZED.
*UNCANNY #291.--Bob

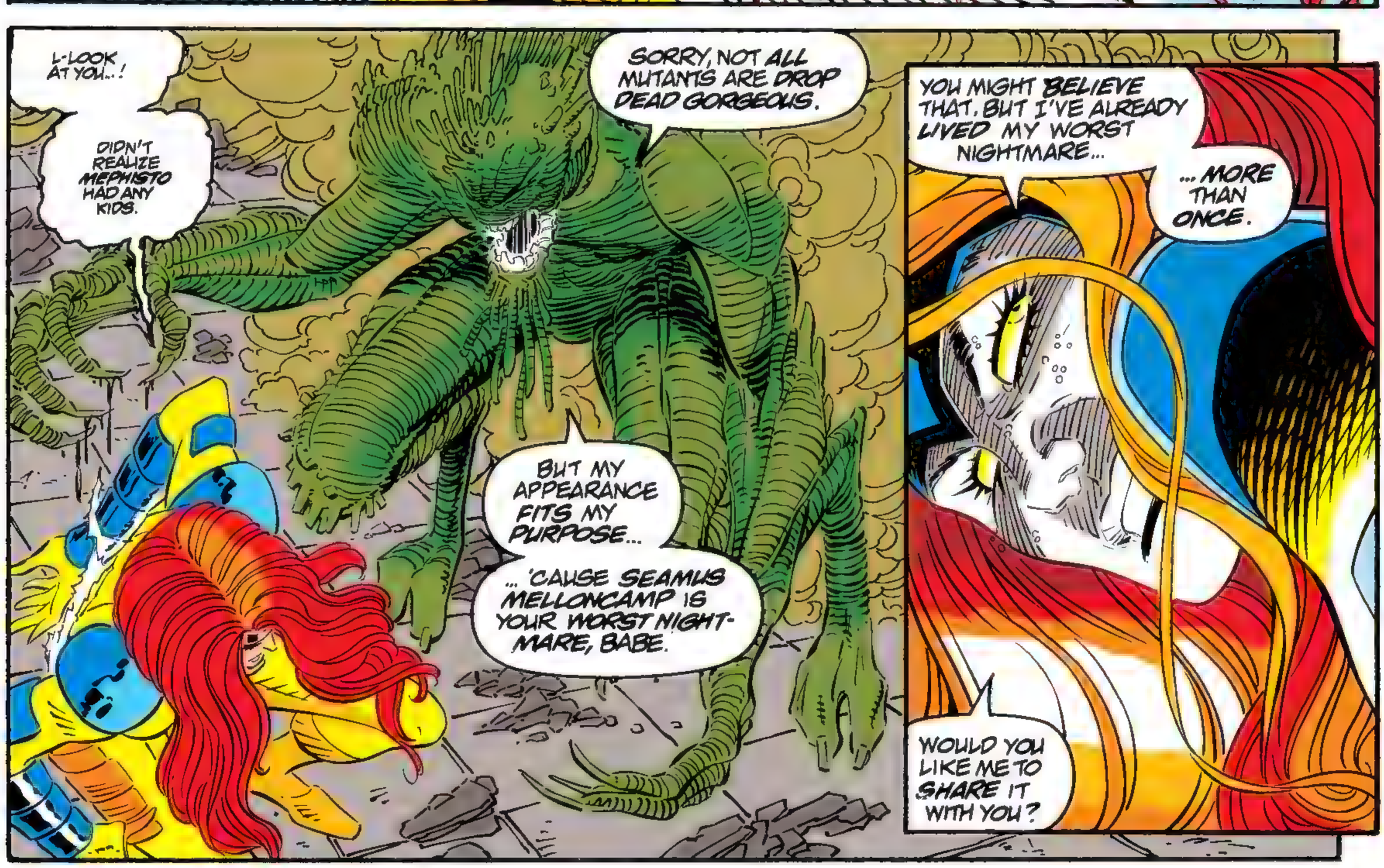

I HAVEN'T HAD THE OPPORTUNITY-- OR THE REASON-- TO BE AGGRESSIVELY CREATIVE.
UNTIL NOW.
SO, WHO'S NEXT?


FOR YEARS, I HAVE OBSERVED YOU FROM AFAR.
THE MIGHTY CYCLOPS AND HIS X-MEN--SUPPRESSING ANY MUTANT WHO DIDN'T EMBRACE THE MAINSTREAM!
YOU WERE SO EAGER TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO.
URMMPF
THERE ARE THOSE OF US WHO WILL NO LONGER BE OPPRESSED BY HUMANS...
... EVEN IF IT MEANS KILLING FELLOW MUT
WHU--?!
WHA--?!
COULD BARELY HEAR UNDERNEATH ALL THOSE FINGERS, FRIEND--BUT I GET THE GIST OF YOUR ARGUMENT.
MMPH
ZIKTS
AND YOU'RE WRONG.
THE X-MEN FIGHT TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL LIVING HUMAN BEINGS--
--REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY'RE HUMANS, MUTANTS--
--FRIEND OR FOE.
YOU'RE WELCOME TO LIVE ANY LIFE YOU WANT...
... UP UNTIL THE MOMENT YOU THREATEN SOMEONE ELSE'S!


MOIRA?!
PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE BE ALIVE!


YE HAD TO WAIT...
...FOR THE FINAL REEL?
YOU KNOW CHARLES-- HE THRIVES ON THESE LAST MINUTE RESCUES.


NOW HOLD TIGHT, MOIRA, I'LL HAVE Y
OOOW!
SRRRP
HEIGHT O' RUDENESS--
--HEIGHT O'!
FIRST YOU CRASH THE PARTY--
--CRASHED IT!
THEN YOU TRY TO SCOOTER OFF WITH THE HOST O' HONOR?


L-LOOK AT YOU...!
DIDN'T REALIZE MEPHISTO HAD ANY KIDS.
SORRY, NOT ALL MUTANTS ARE DROP DEAD GORGEOUS.
BUT MY APPEARANCE FITS MY PURPOSE...
...'CAUSE SEAMUS MELLONCAMP IS YOUR WORST NIGHT-MARE, BABE.
YOU MIGHT BELIEVE THAT. BUT I'VE ALREADY LIVED MY WORST NIGHTMARE...
...MORE THAN ONCE.
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO SHARE IT WITH YOU?

IN MY WORST NIGHTMARE--

--I'M JUST MYSELF.

NOT THE PHOENIX.

NOT MADELYNE PRYOR.

NOT EVEN MARVEL GIRL.

I'M JUST JEAN GREY--ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL PSI'S ON THE PLANET!

THE FRIGHTENING THING IS, IN MY DREAM, I'M NOT AFRAID TO LOSE MYSELF IN MY MUTANT ABILITY.

I CUT LOOSE.

COMPLETELY.

THAT'S MY WORST NIGHTMARE.

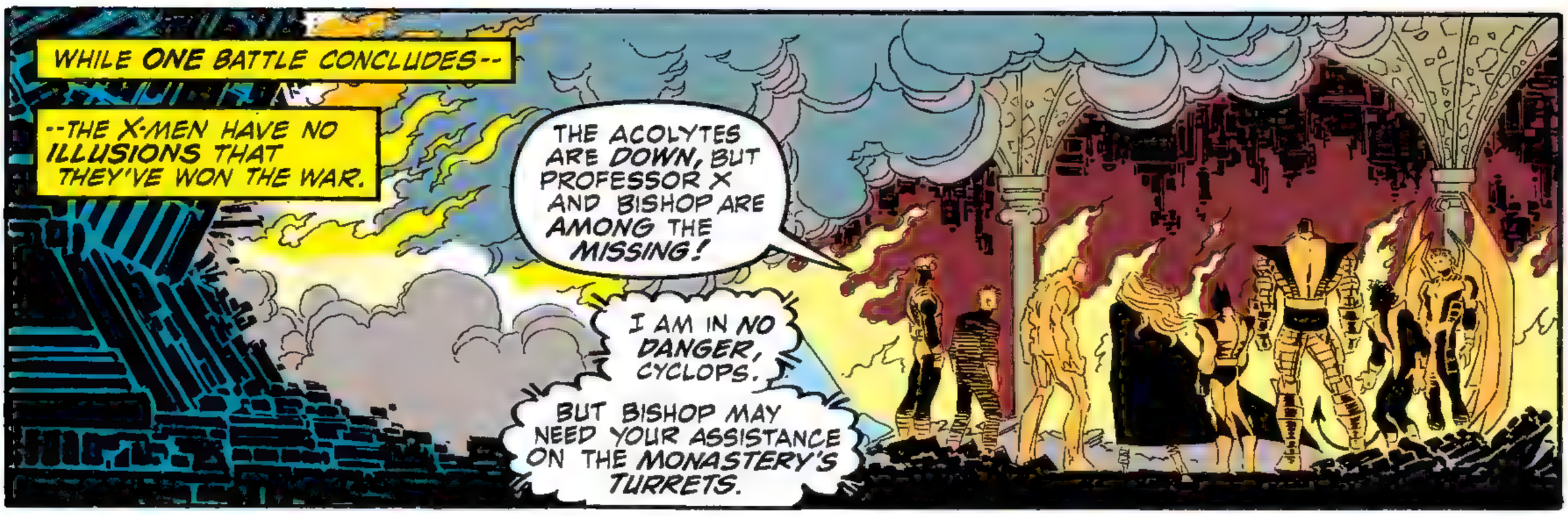
WEEEOOOOOO

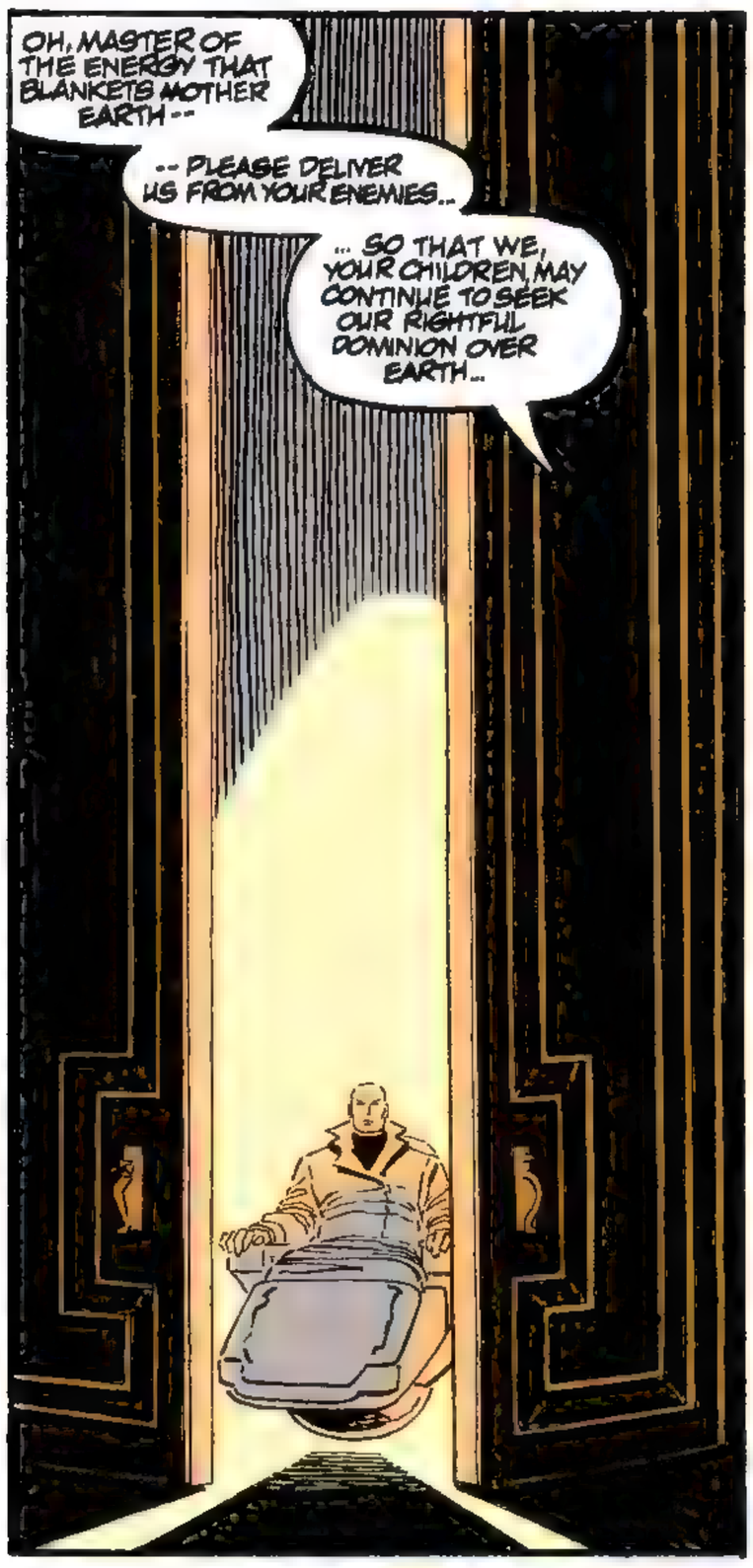
SEE?

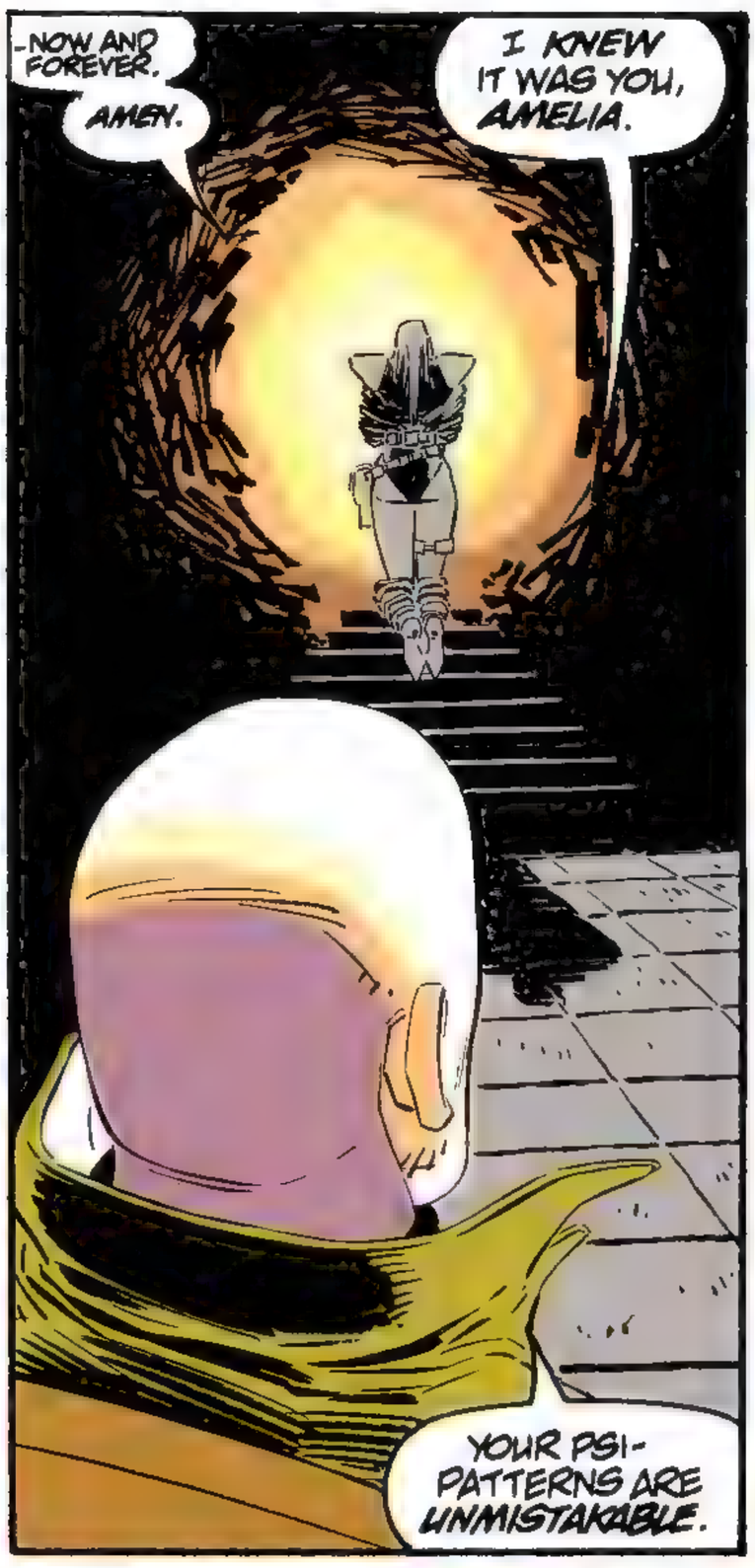
BEFORE THE ACOLYTE'S INDESTRUCTIBLE BODY LANDS SOMEWHERE IN THE PYRENEES...

... JEAN GREY IS EN ROUTE TO THE X-MEN'S BLACKBIRD...

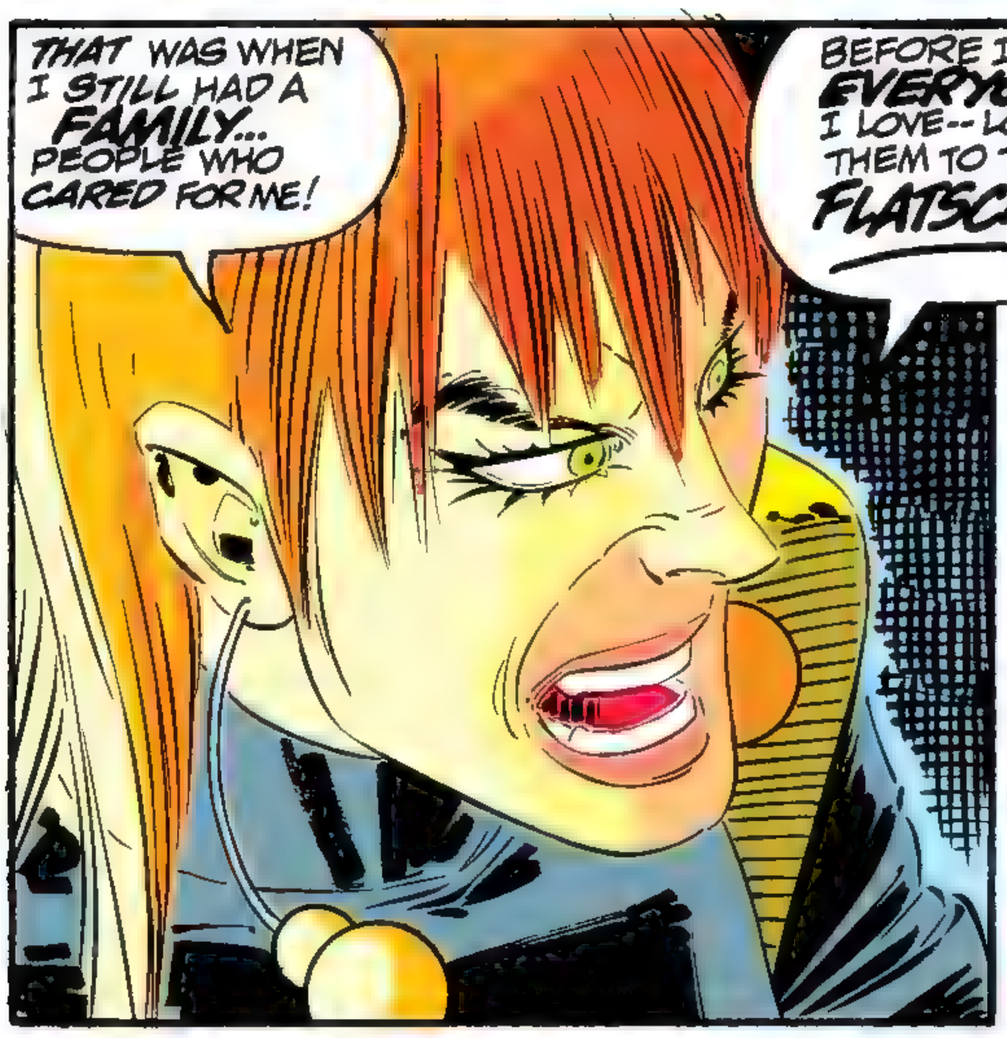
... AND THE MEDICAL FACILITIES WITHIN.

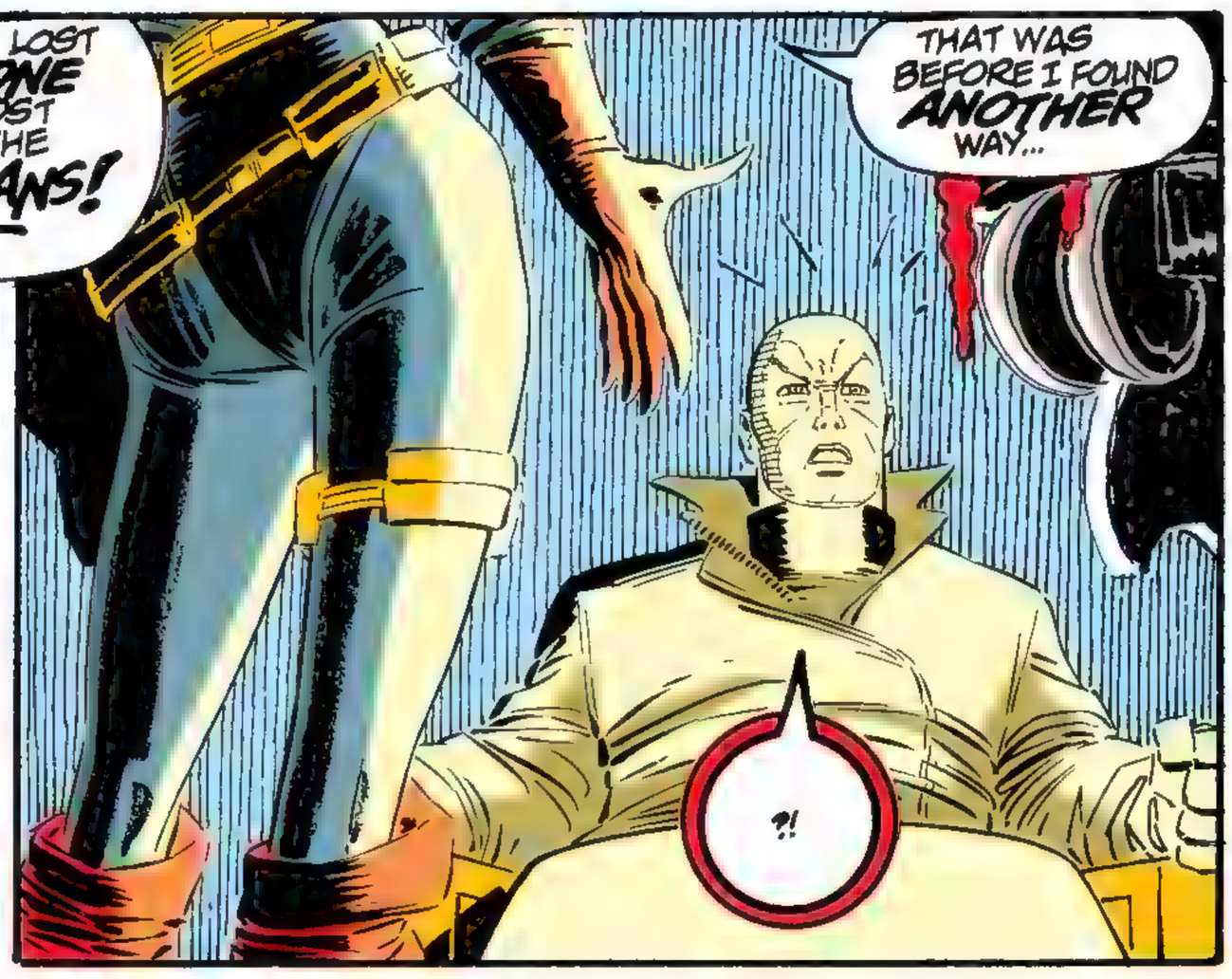

WHILE ONE BATTLE CONCLUDES--
--THE X-MEN HAVE NO ILLUSIONS THAT THEY'VE WON THE WAR.
THE ACOLYTES ARE DOWN, BUT PROFESSOR X AND BISHOP ARE AMONG THE MISSING!
I AM IN NO DANGER, CYCLOPS.
BUT BISHOP MAY NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE ON THE MONASTERY'S TURRETS.

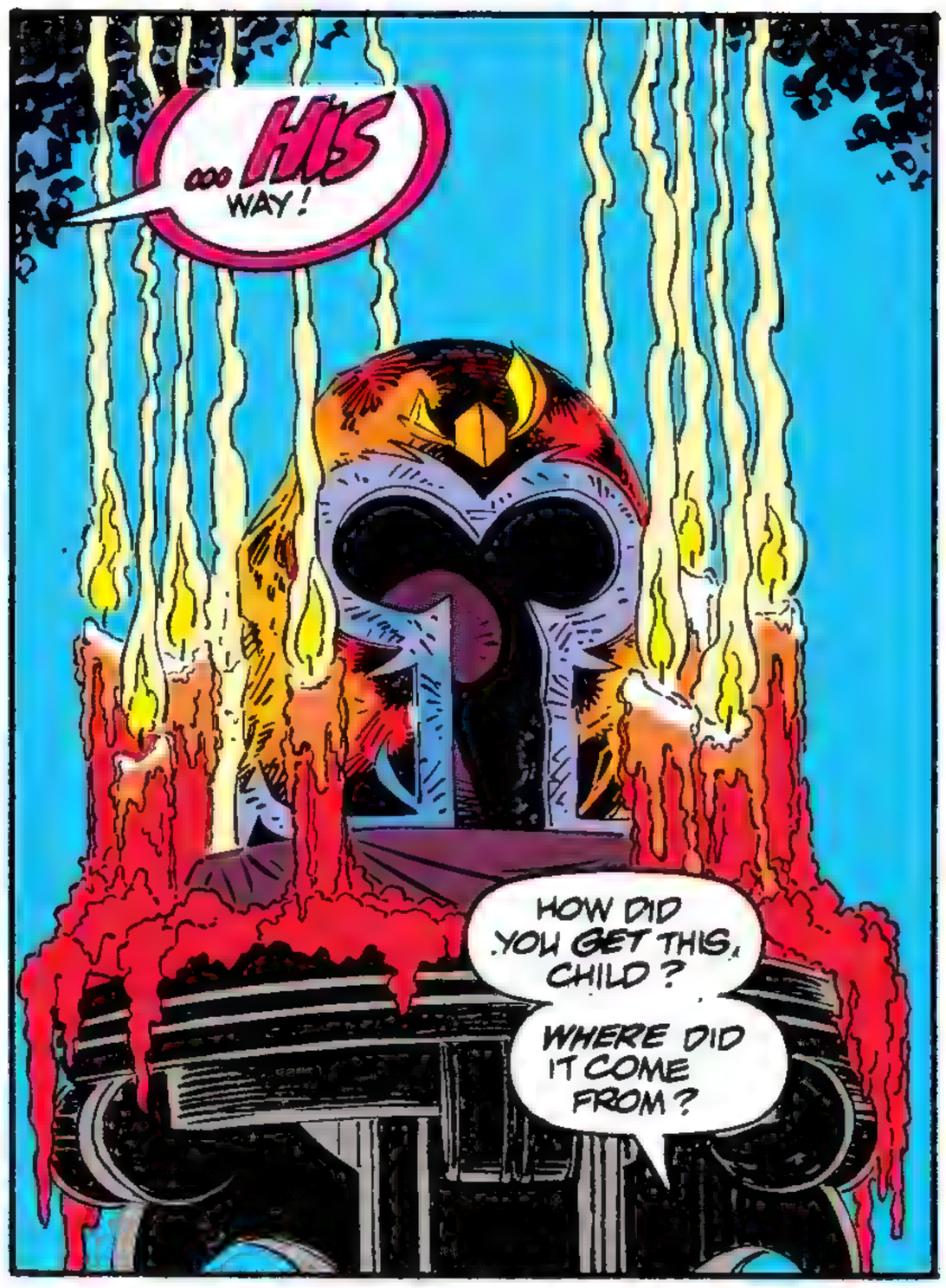

OH, MASTER OF THE ENERGY THAT BLANKETS MOTHER EARTH--
-- PLEASE DELIVER US FROM YOUR ENEMIES...
... SO THAT WE, YOUR CHILDREN, MAY CONTINUE TO SEEK OUR RIGHTFUL DOMINION OVER EARTH...

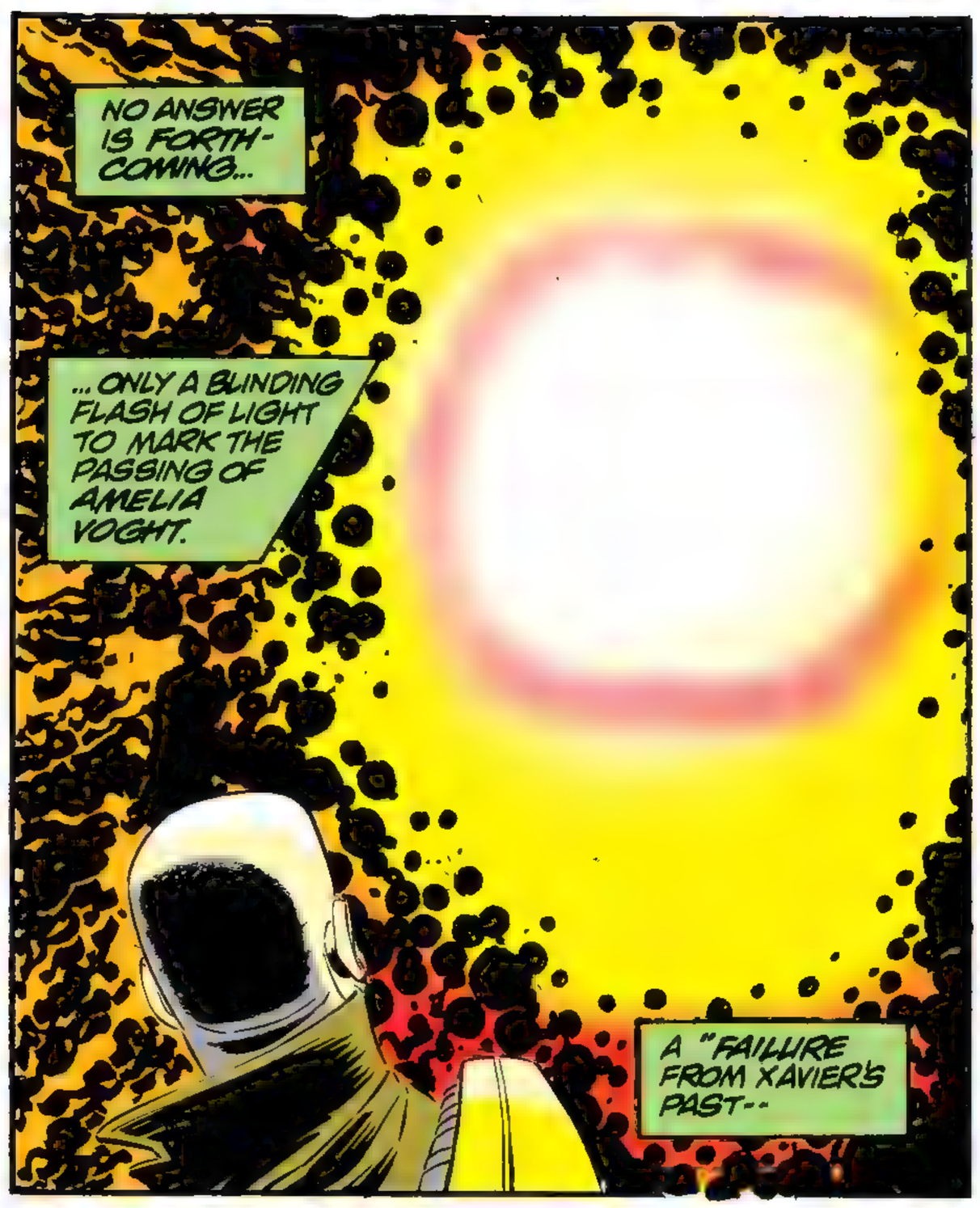

-NOW AND FOREVER.
AMEN.
I KNEW IT WAS YOU, AMELIA.
YOUR PSI-PATTERNS ARE UNMISTAKABLE.

ARE THEY, SIR?
YEARS YOU SPENT ON YOUR OWN--
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?
--BECAUSE YOU'D CONVINCED ME YOU WANTED NO PART IN MY CLASS OF ORIGINAL STUDENTS.
YOU CLAIMED YOU HAD NO DESIRE TO TAKE SIDES IN--

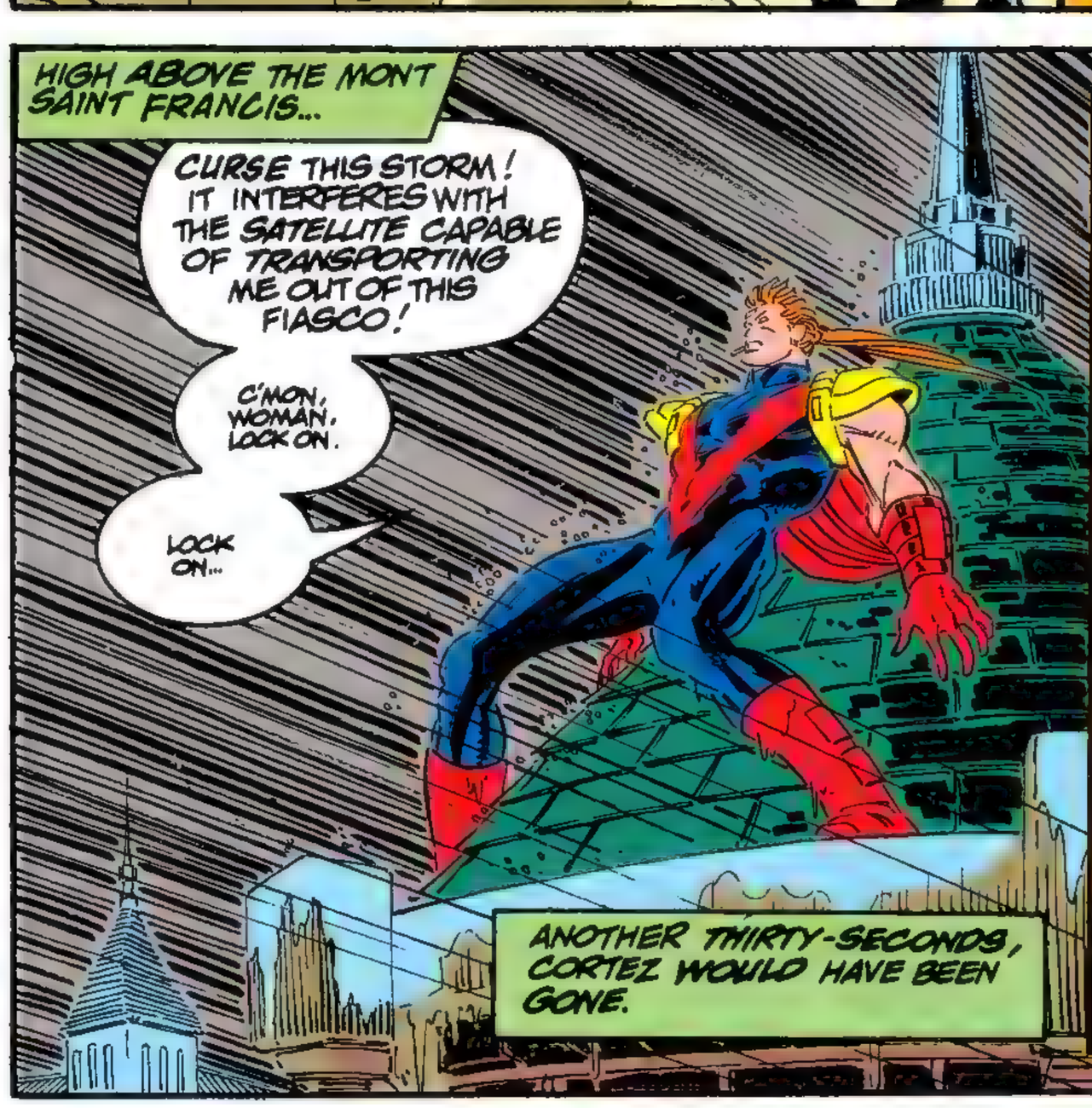

THAT WAS WHEN I STILL HAD A FAMILY... PEOPLE WHO CARED FOR ME!
BEFORE I LOST EVERYONE I LOVE--LOST THEM TO THE FLATSCANS!


THAT WAS BEFORE I FOUND ANOTHER WAY...
?!


...HIS WAY!
HOW DID YOU GET THIS, CHILD?
WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

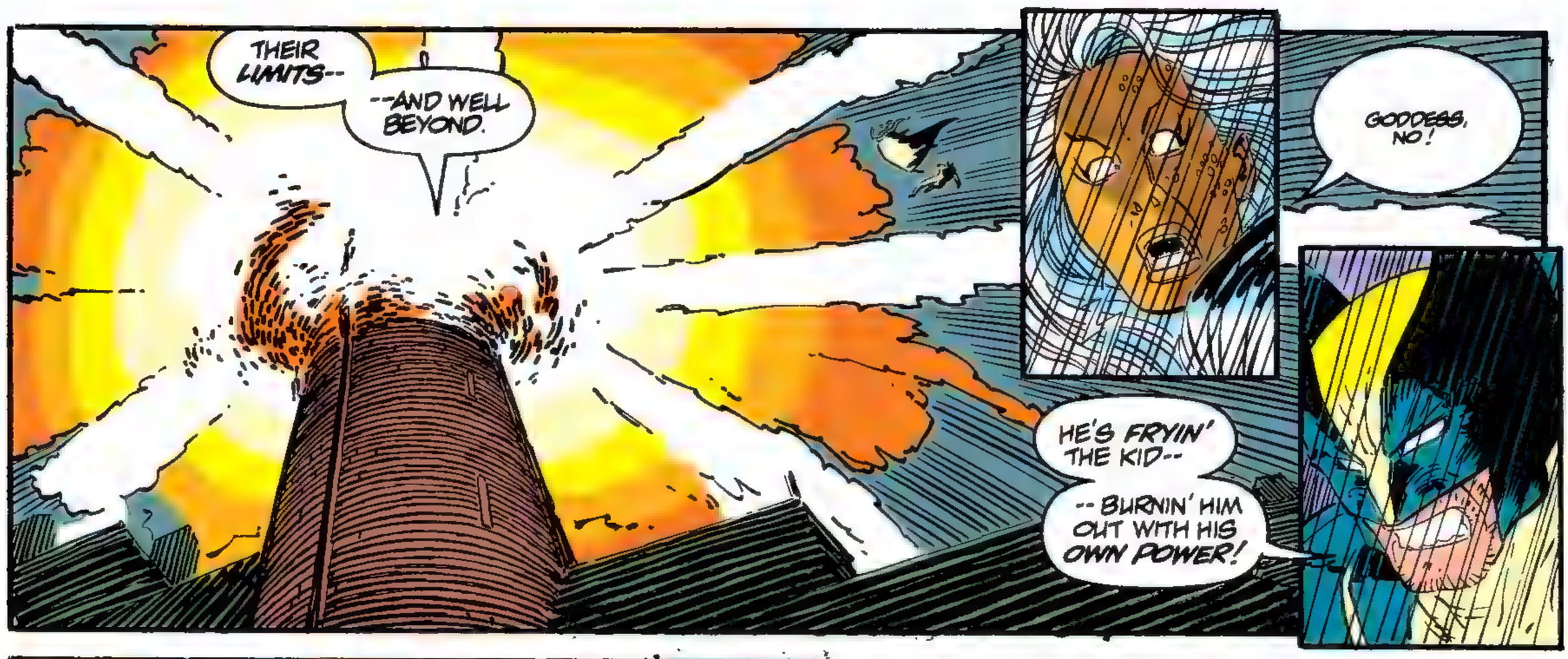

NO ANSWER IS FORTH-COMING...
...ONLY A BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT TO MARK THE PASSING OF AMELIA VOGHT.
A "FAILURE FROM XAVIER'S PAST--

--SOMEHOW TIED INTO THE STRUGGLE YET TO COME.
THE FIRE NEXT TIME.

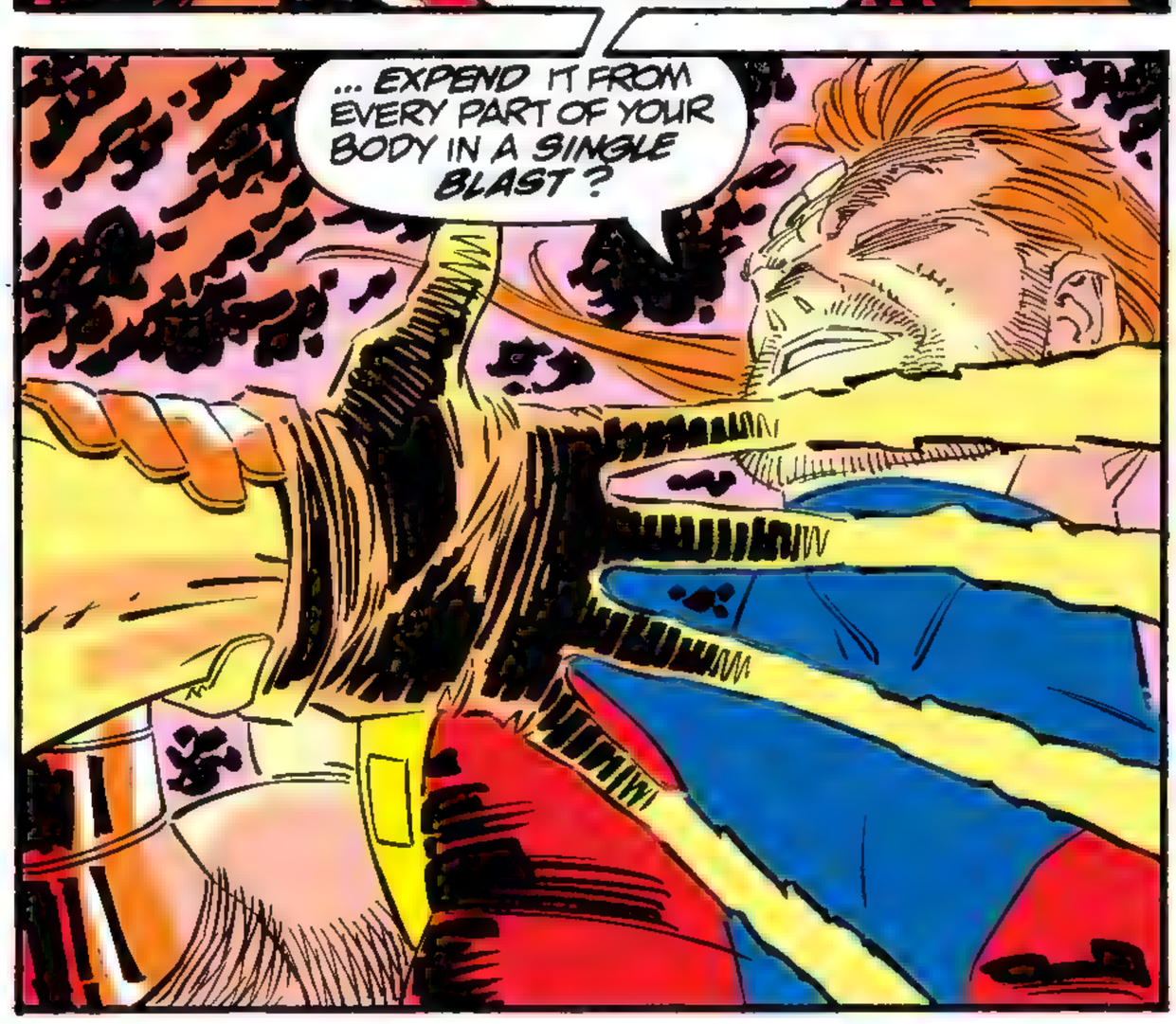

HIGH ABOVE THE MONT SAINT FRANCIS...
CURSE THIS STORM! IT INTERFERES WITH THE SATELLITE CAPABLE OF TRANSPORTING ME OUT OF THIS FIASCO!
C'MON, WOMAN, LOCK ON.
LOCK ON...
ANOTHER THIRTY-SECONDS, CORTEZ WOULD HAVE BEEN GONE.

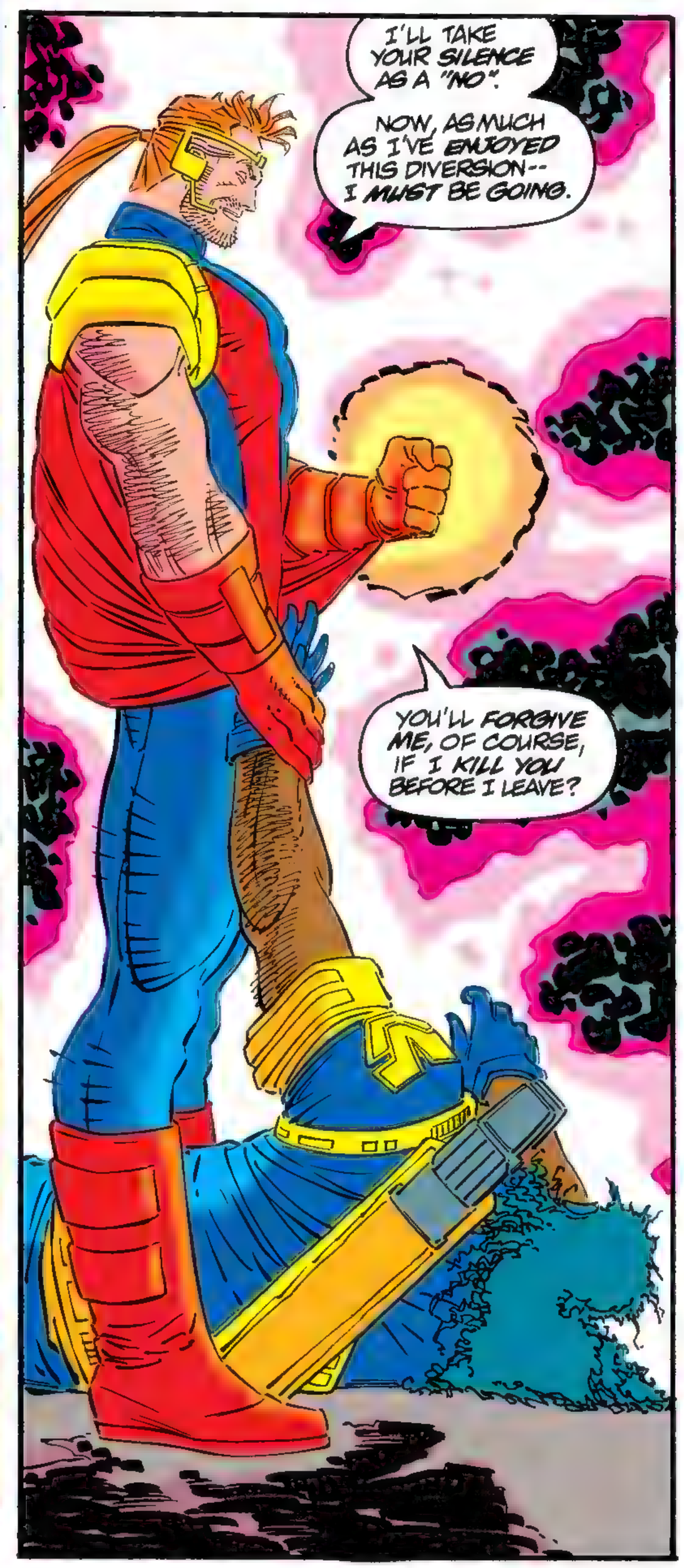
UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM --
SKRUCHK
BISHOP IS UNWILLING TO WAIT THAT LONG.

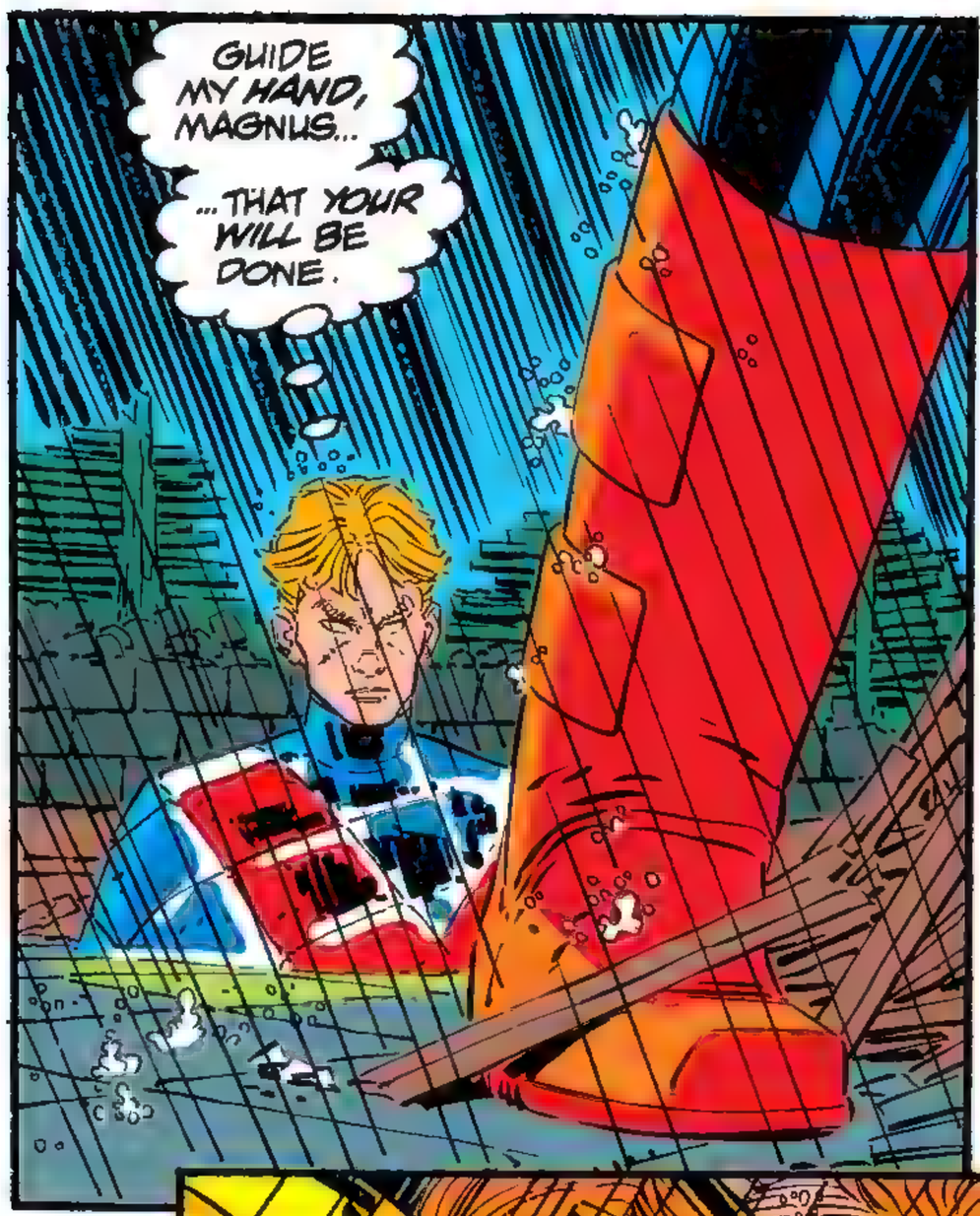
UNHAND ME YOU--
--TEMPORAL ABERRATION!
MAYBE.
EVENTUALLY.
BUT FIRST, EXPLAIN SOMETHING TO ME.
THAT EITHER MEANS YOU SCRATCHED SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE...
...OR MAYBE YOU DIED IN THE HERE AND NOW!
YOU'VE GOT ALL THE TRAPPINGS OF A MAJOR PLAYER, BUT--GET THIS--IN THE FUTURE WHERE I WAS RAISED...
... NO ONE HAS EVER HEARD OF YOU.
BISHOP, NO!
CLOSER, 'RORO--HE CAN'T HEAR YA' OVER THE WIND!
IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM--
--THEN I'LL ASSUME YOU'RE IGNORANT AS TO HOW MY POWERS WORK.
ALLOW ME TO DEMON-STRATE.
THEY'RE BASED ON ENERGY--AND MY ABILITY TO AMPLIFY IT TO ANY DEGREE I SO CHOOSE.
YOU SEE, I MAKE IT A POINT TO BE INTIMATELY AWARE OF EVERY ASPECT OF MY ENEMIES--POTENIAL OR OTHERWISE.
THEIR STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES...

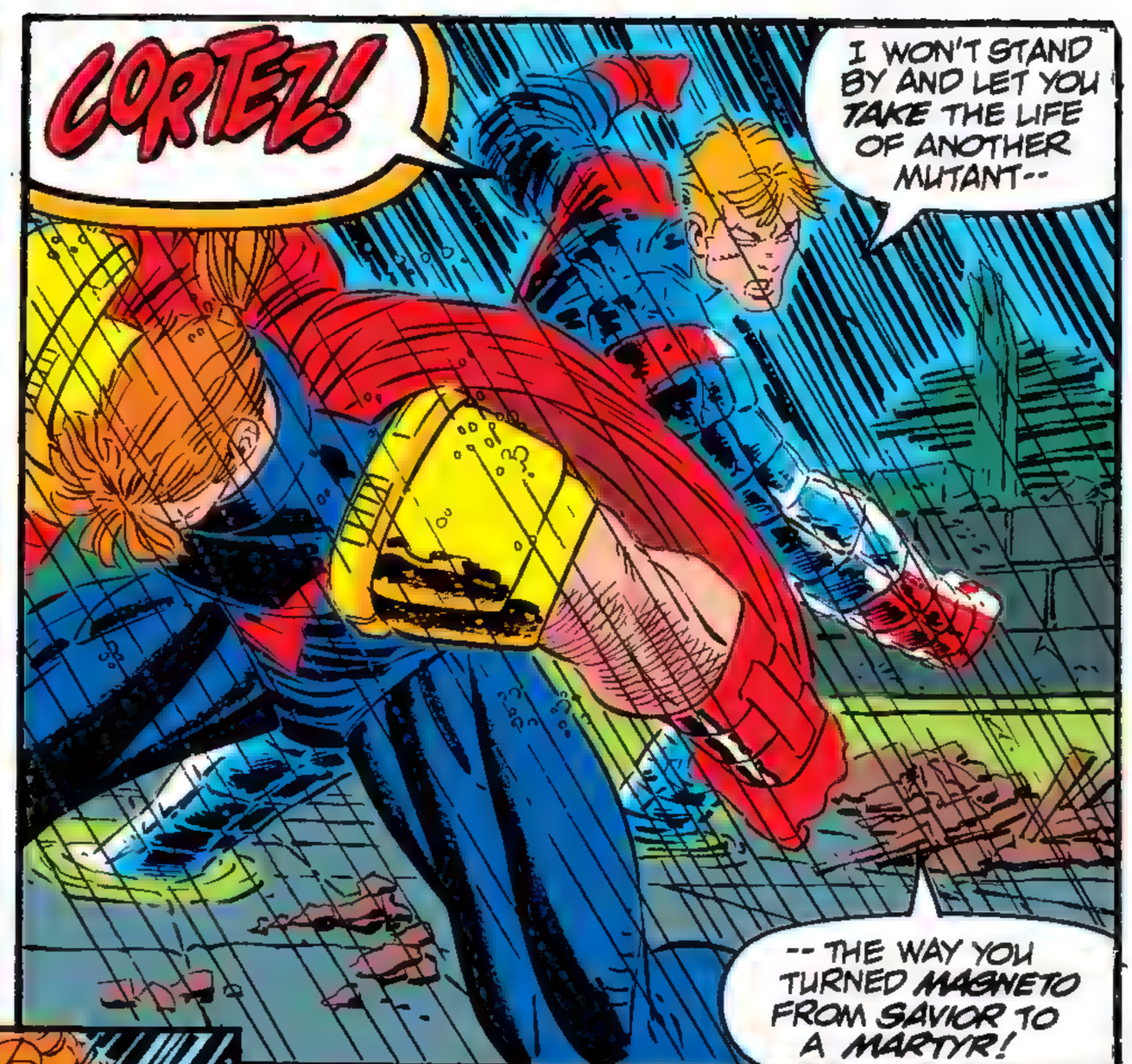

THEIR LIMITS--
--AND WELL BEYOND.
GODDESS, NO!
HE'S FRYIN' THE KID--
-- BURNIN' HIM OUT WITH HIS OWN POWER!

I KNOW THAT YOU-- FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES--ARE A WALKING POWER CELL...
...ONLY AS STRONG OR WEAK AT THE AMOUNT OF APPROPRIATED ENERGY IN YOUR BODY AT ANY GIVEN TIME.
TELL ME, BISHOP-- HAVE YOU EVER DARED EXHAUST ALL THAT ENERGY...


... EXPEND IT FROM EVERY PART OF YOUR BODY IN A SINGLE BLAST?


I'LL TAKE YOUR SILENCE AS A "NO".
NOW, AS MUCH AS I'VE ENJOYED THIS DIVERSION-- I MUST BE GOING.
YOU'LL FORGIVE ME, OF COURSE, IF I KILL YOU BEFORE I LEAVE?





WHAT I DID TO THAT FOSSIL, BOY--

--IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE FATE THAT AWAITS YOU.

A SINGLE BLAST WILL REDUCE YOU TO SOM

SNIKT

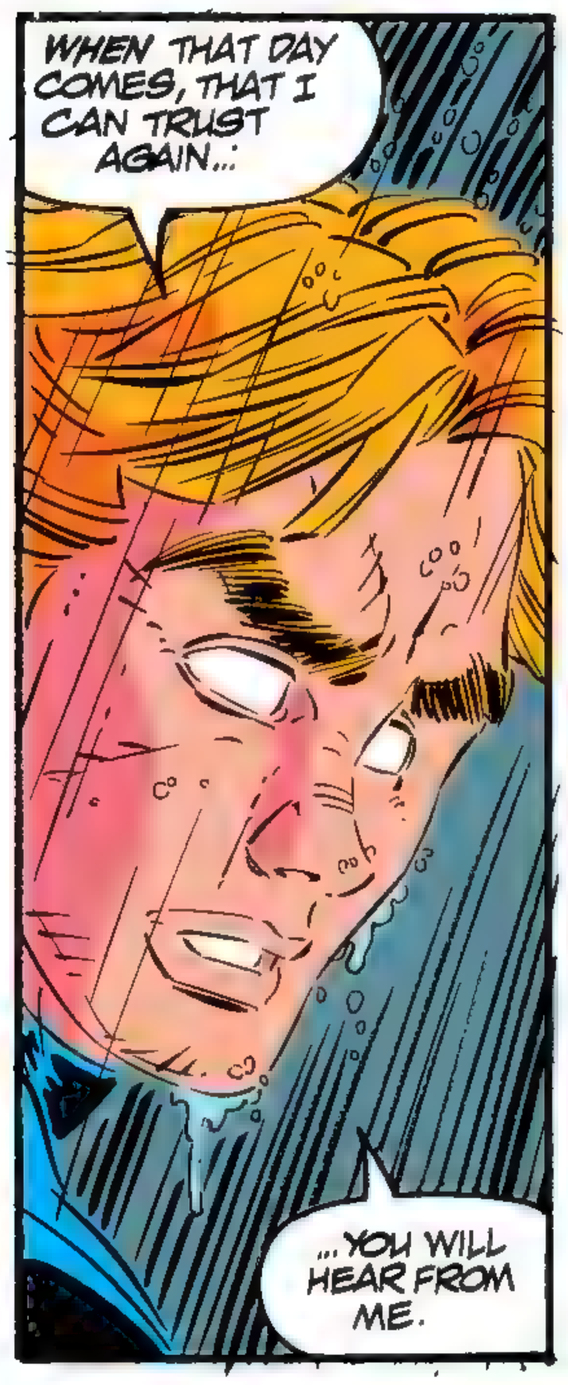
I...

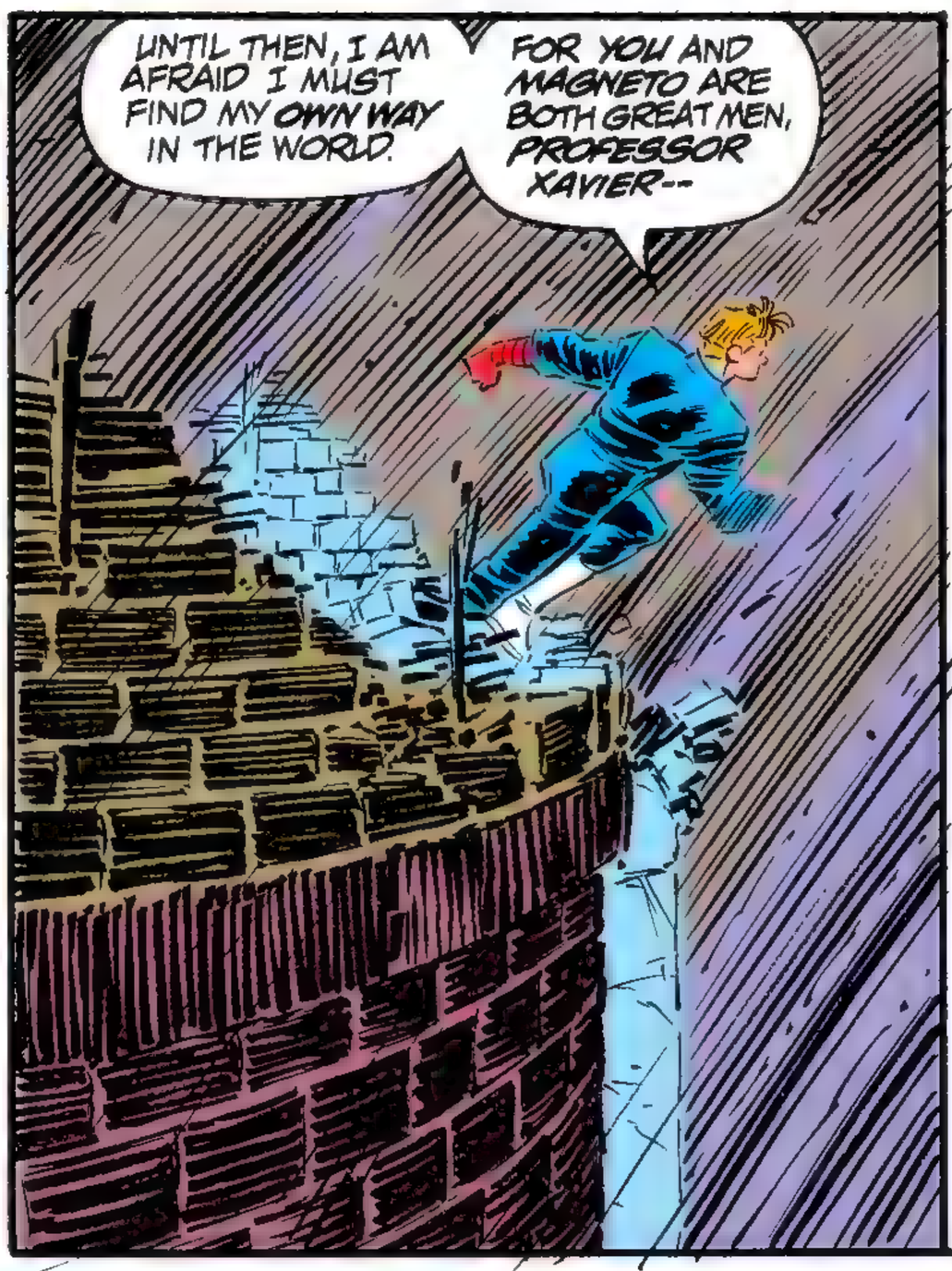
...I'M STILL

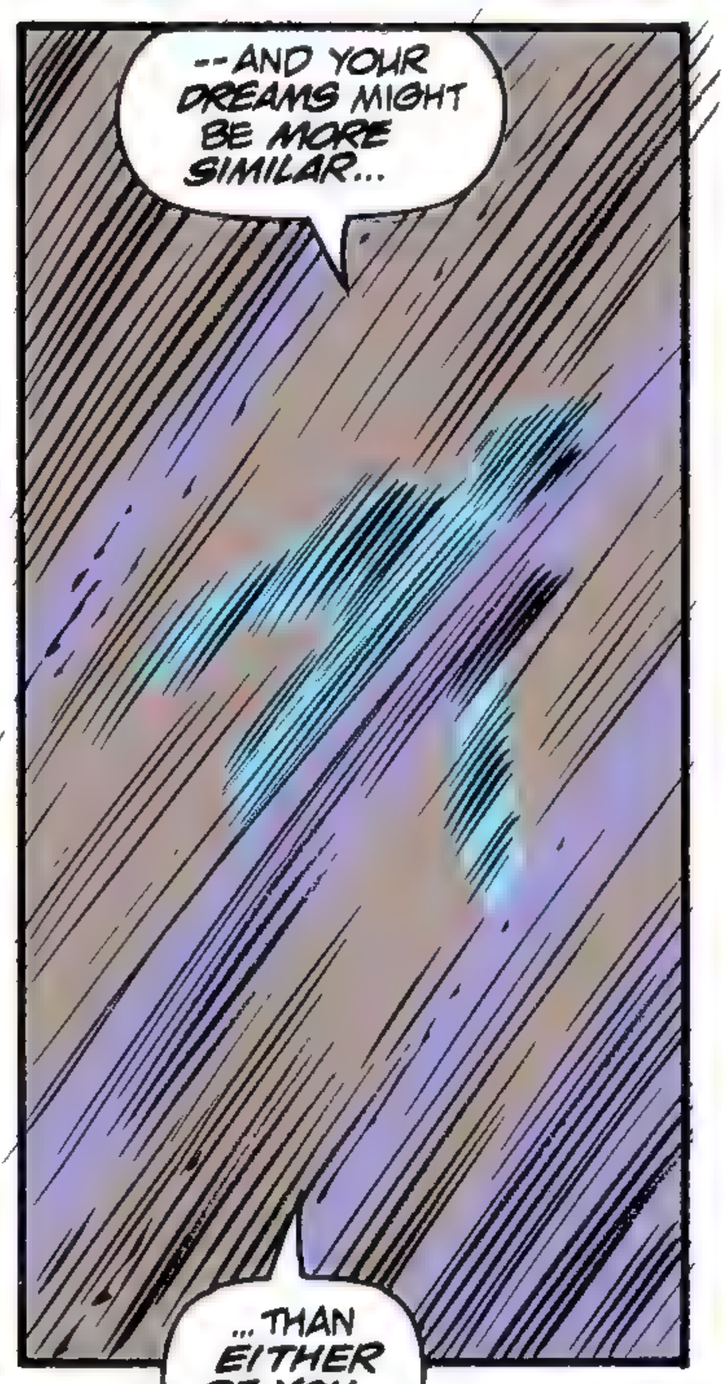
BREATHING?

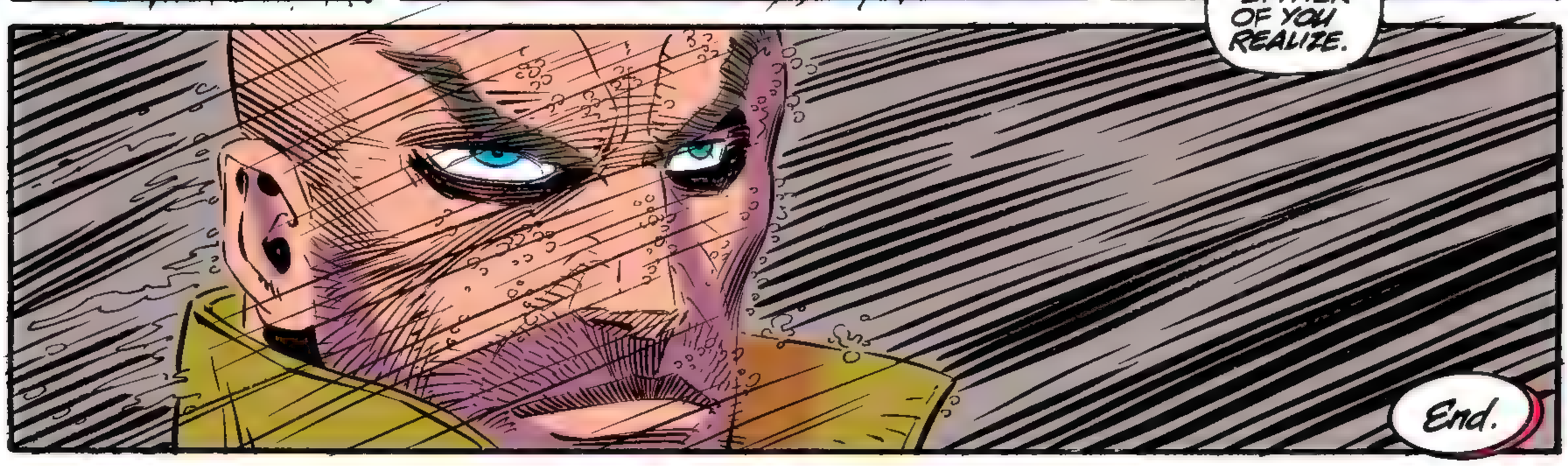
LUCKY YOU.

SOON...
ororo?
REST EASY, BISHOP--ROBERT IS BRINGING THE BLACK-BIRD.
I SUPPOSE YOU WILL INTERROGATE ME--SUBVERT MY WILL AND ENLIST ME IN YOUR CAUSE?
DESPITE WHAT YOU MAY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT--THE X-MEN DON'T WORK THAT WAY.
IF THE DAY COMES YOU CHOSE TO STAND WITH US--
--IT MUST BE YOUR OWN DECISION.


WHEN THAT DAY COMES, THAT I CAN TRUST AGAIN...
...YOU WILL HEAR FROM ME.


UNTIL THEN, I AM AFRAID I MUST FIND MY OWN WAY IN THE WORLD.
FOR YOU AND MAGNETO ARE BOTH GREAT MEN, PROFESSOR XAVIER--


--AND YOUR DREAMS MIGHT BE MORE SIMILAR...
...THAN EITHER OF YOU REALIZE.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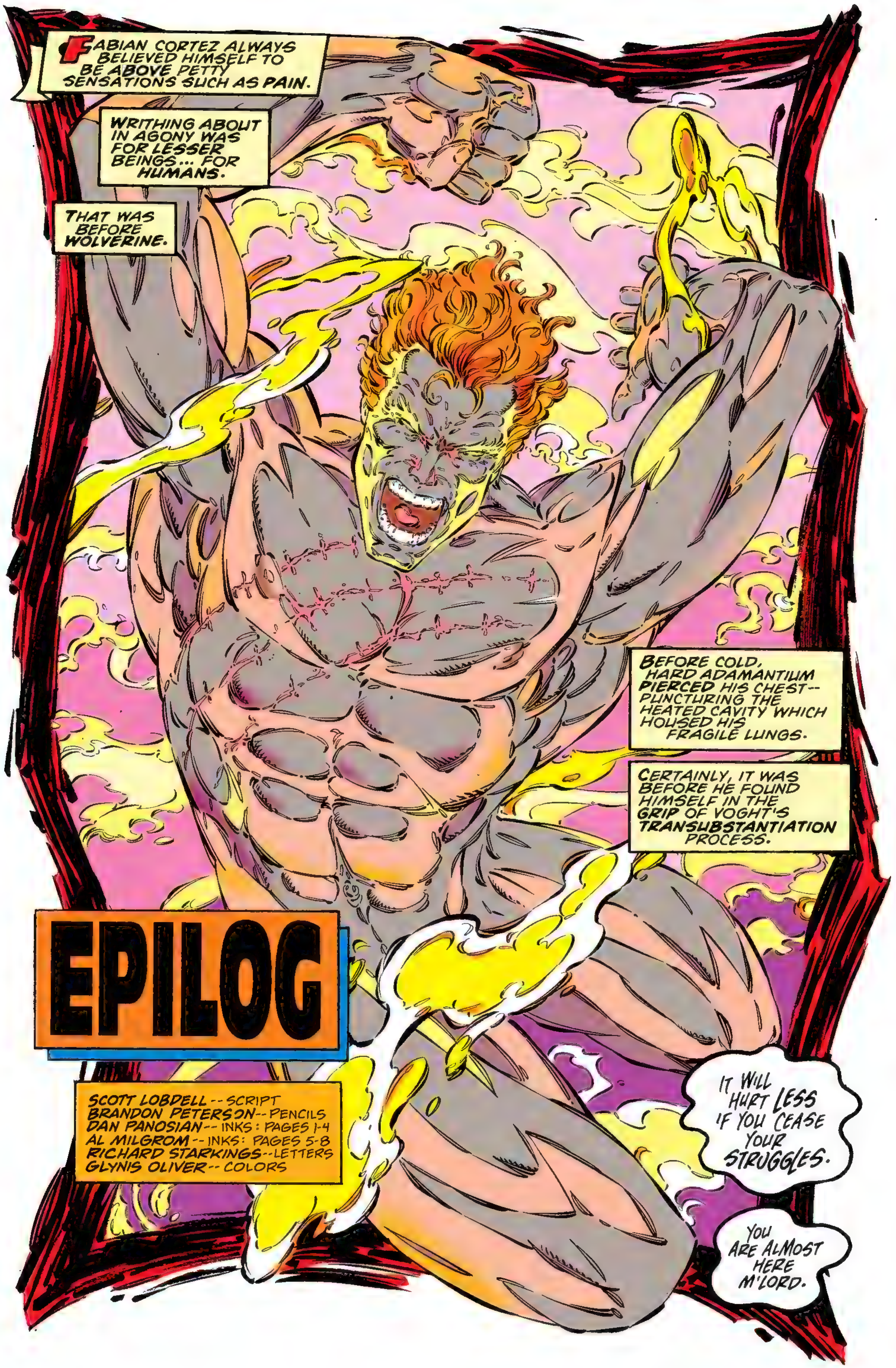
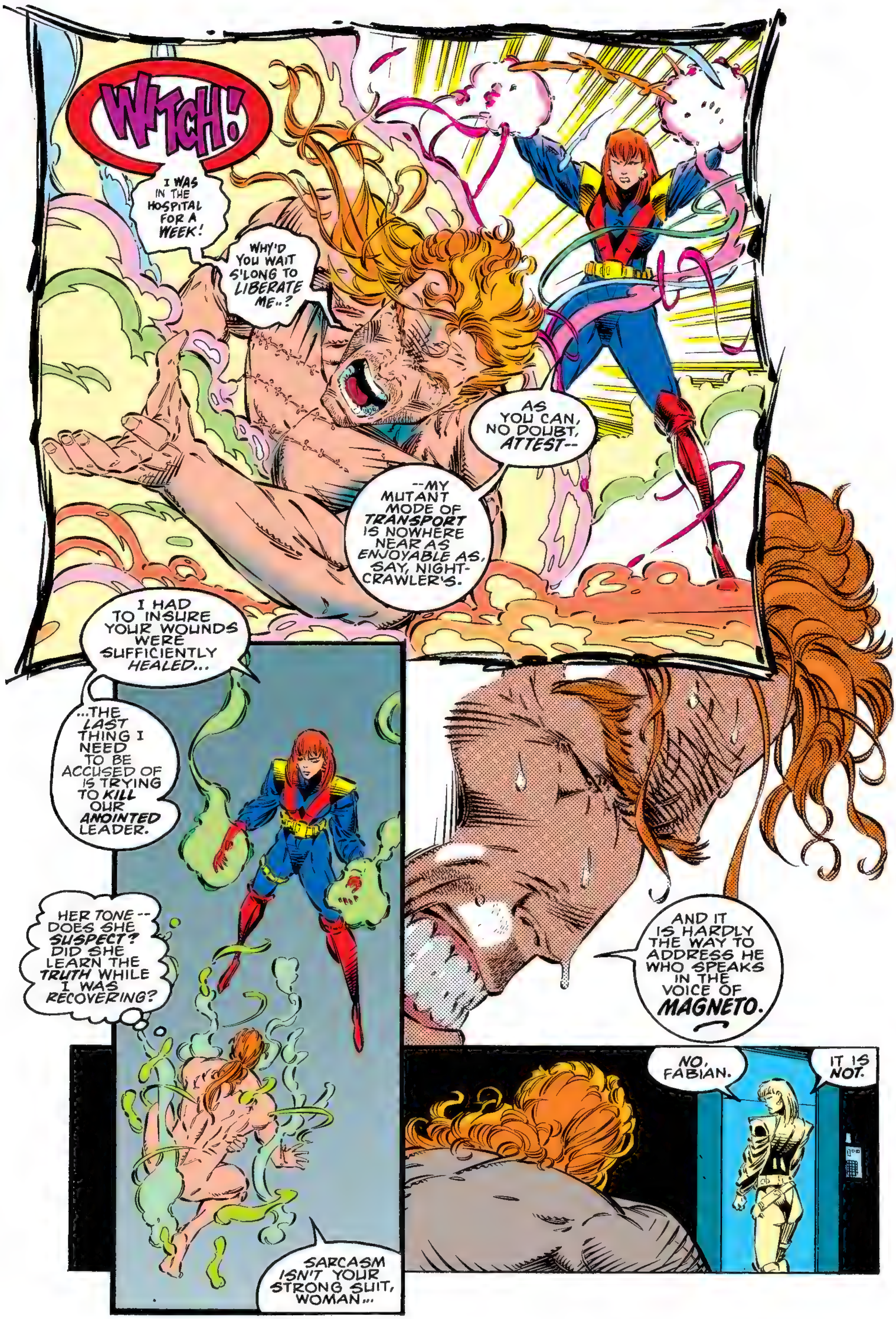
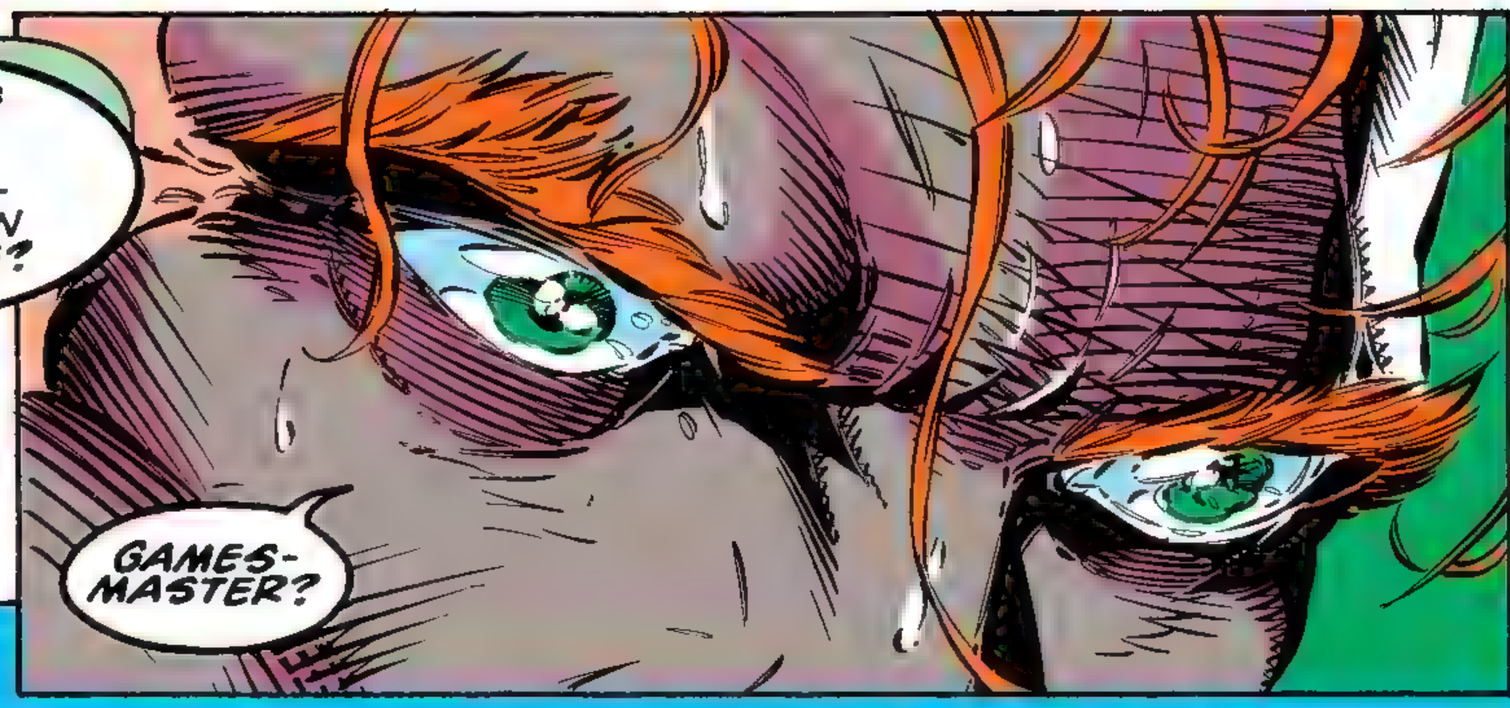

FABIAN CORTEZ ALWAYS BELIEVED HIMSELF TO BE ABOVE PETTY SENSATIONS SUCH AS PAIN.
WRITHING ABOUT IN AGONY WAS FOR LESSER BEINGS... FOR HUMANS.
THAT WAS BEFORE WOLVERINE.
BEFORE COLD, HARD ADAMANTIUM PIERCED HIS CHEST-- PUNCTURING THE HEATED CAVITY WHICH HOUSED HIS FRAGILE LUNGS.
CERTAINLY, IT WAS BEFORE HE FOUND HIMSELF IN THE GRIP OF VOGHT'S TRANSUBSTANTIATION PROCESS.
EPILOG
SCOTT LOBDELL -- SCRIPT
BRANDON PETERSON -- PENCILS
DAN PANOSIAN -- INKS: PAGES 1-4
AL MILGROM -- INKS: PAGES 5-8
RICHARD STARKINGS -- LETTERS
GLYNIS OLIVER -- COLORS
IT WILL HURT LESS IF YOU CEASE YOUR STRUGGLES.
YOU ARE ALMOST HERE M'LORD.


WITCH!
I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL FOR A WEEK!
WHY'D YOU WAIT S'LONG TO LIBERATE ME..?
AS YOU CAN, NO DOUBT, ATTEST--
--MY MUTANT MODE OF TRANSPORT IS NOWHERE NEAR AS ENJOYABLE AS, SAY, NIGHT-CRAWLER'S.
I HAD TO INSURE YOUR WOUNDS WERE SUFFICIENTLY HEALED...
...THE LAST THING I NEED TO BE ACCUSED OF IS TRYING TO KILL OUR ANOINTED LEADER.
HER TONE -- DOES SHE SUSPECT? DID SHE LEARN THE TRUTH WHILE I WAS RECOVERING?
AND IT IS HARDLY THE WAY TO ADDRESS HE WHO SPEAKS IN THE VOICE OF MAGNETO.
SARCASM ISN'T YOUR STRONG SUIT, WOMAN...
NO, FABIAN.
IT IS NOT.



EXCELLENT! NO DOUBT YOU'VE COME TO AWARD ME POINTS FOR THE DEATH OF THE X-MAN, BISHOP -- HE MUST HAVE DIED WHILE I WAS RECOVERING IN FRANCE.

MY LEADER-SHIP OF THE UPSTARTS WILL BE UNDIS-PUTED!

ON THE CONTRARY CORTEZ...

...ON BOTH COUNTS.

IT SEEMS THE YOUNG MAN IS MORE RESILIENT THAN ANYONE GAVE HIM CREDIT FOR -- THE EXCEPTION BEING FITZROY.

AS TO YOUR ROLE AS CZAR OF THE UPSTARTS...

...LET'S JUST SAY YOU SHOULD HOLD OFF CHANGING THE TITLE ON YOUR STATIONERY ANY TIME SOON...

I'M SORRY TO INFORM YOU, RECENT COMPLICATIONS HAVE ARISEN --

-- WHICH NECESSITATE THAT I TAKE AWAY ALL THE POINTS YOU'VE ACQUIRED TO DATE.

NO! I WILL NOT ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN!

MAGNETO'S DEATH WAS A DIRECT RESULT OF MY ACTIONS!

WHAT POSSIBLE "COMPLICATIONS" COULD CHANGE THAT?!

FIGURE IT OUT FOR YOURSELF...

DON'T FADE AWAY ON ME WHILE I'M *SPEAKING* TO YOU!

I'M NOT LIKE THE *REST* OF THE UPSTARTS!

I WAS *BORN* ROYALTY -- AND I WILL NOT BE *DISMISSED* LIKE A *BOTHERSOME CHILD!*

CURSE HIM!

WITH MY HOLD OVER THE ACOLYTES GROWING MORE *TENUOUS* BY THE MOMENT--

-- MY *DOMINION* OVER THE UPSTARTS IS NO LONGER AN AMUSING DIVERSION...

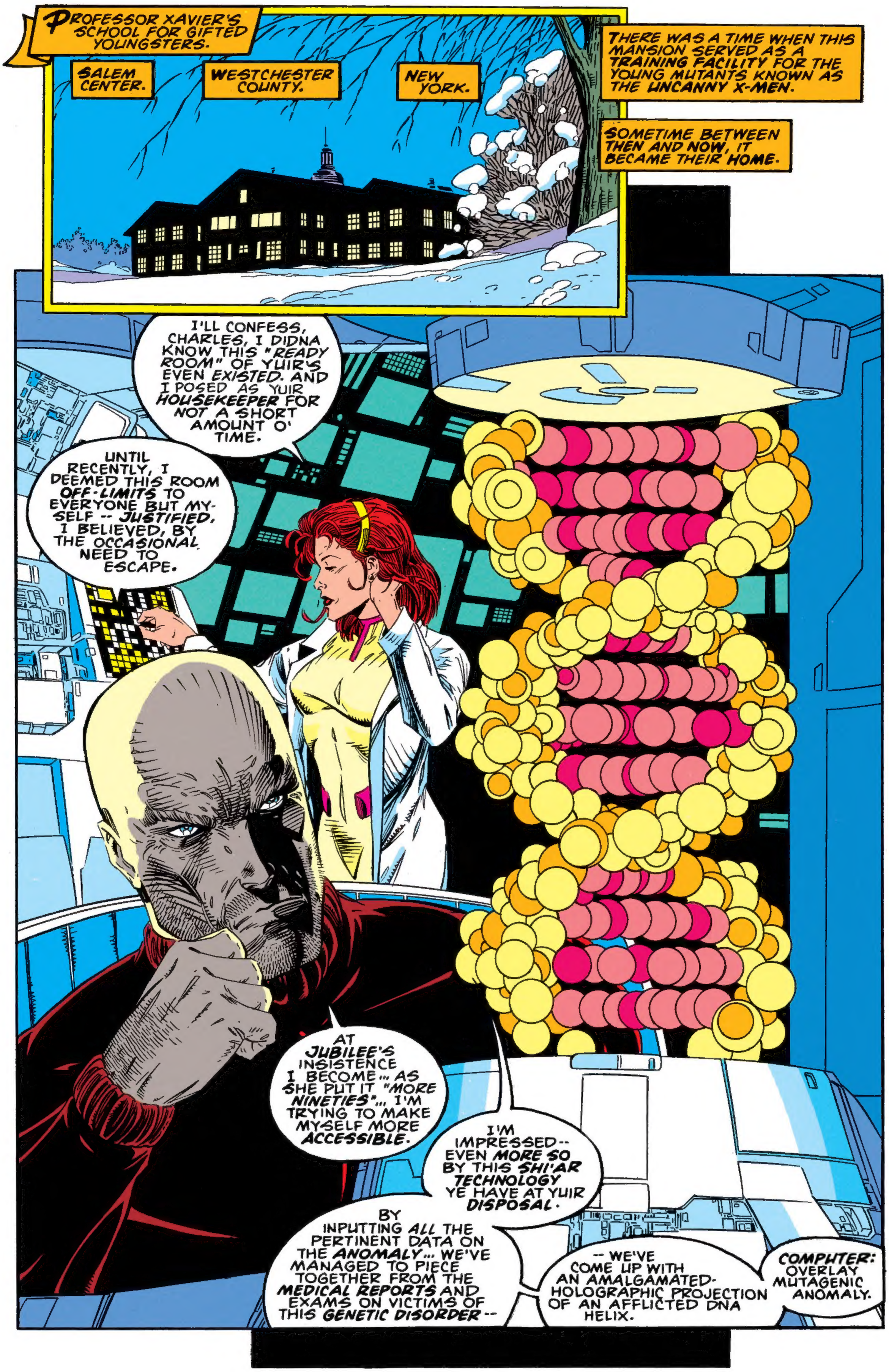
... IT IS NOW A MATTER OF *SALVATION!*

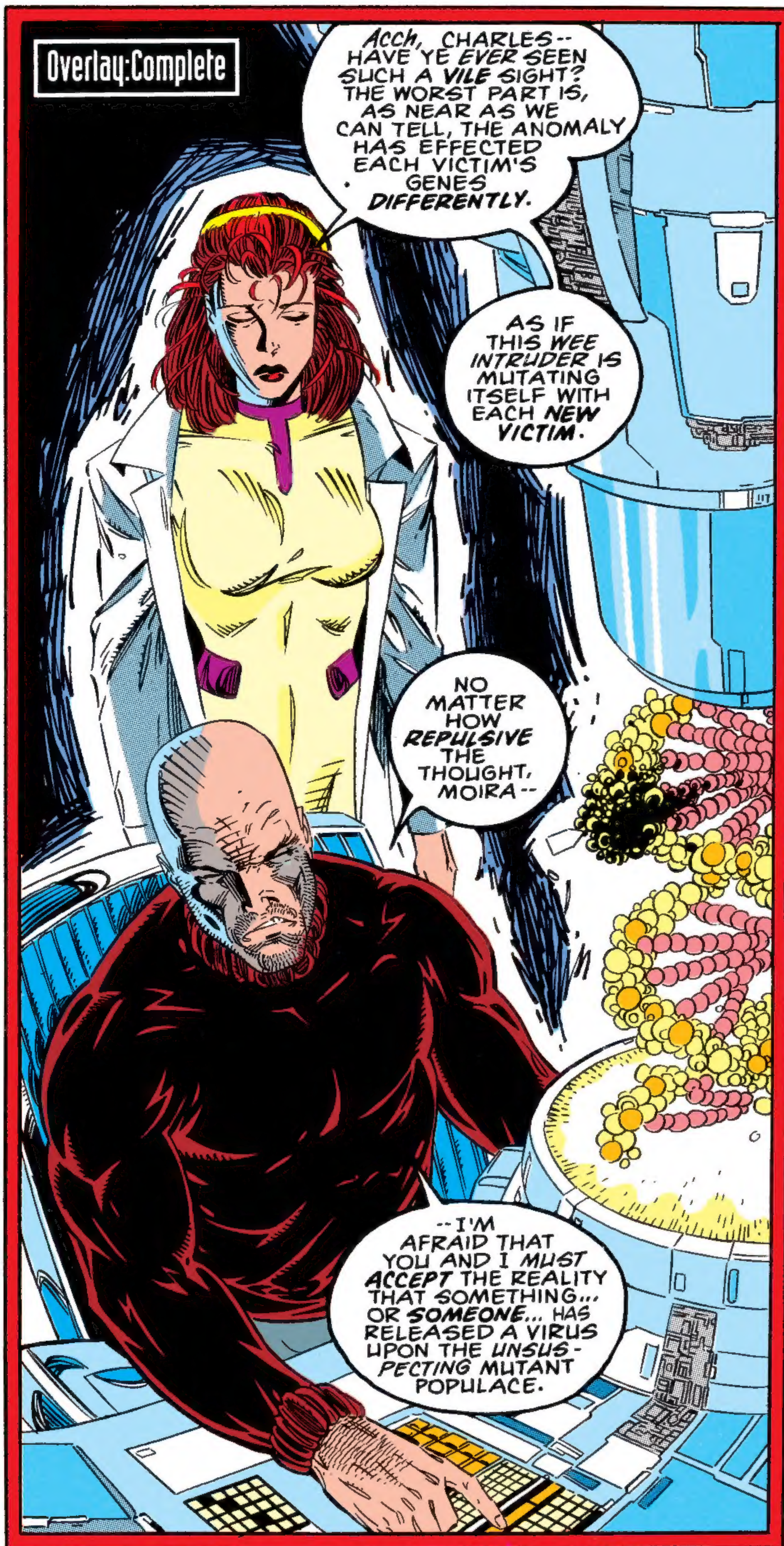
HOW COULD I POSSIBLY LOSE THE POINTS FOR MAGNUS'S DEATH, *UNLESS*..?

...

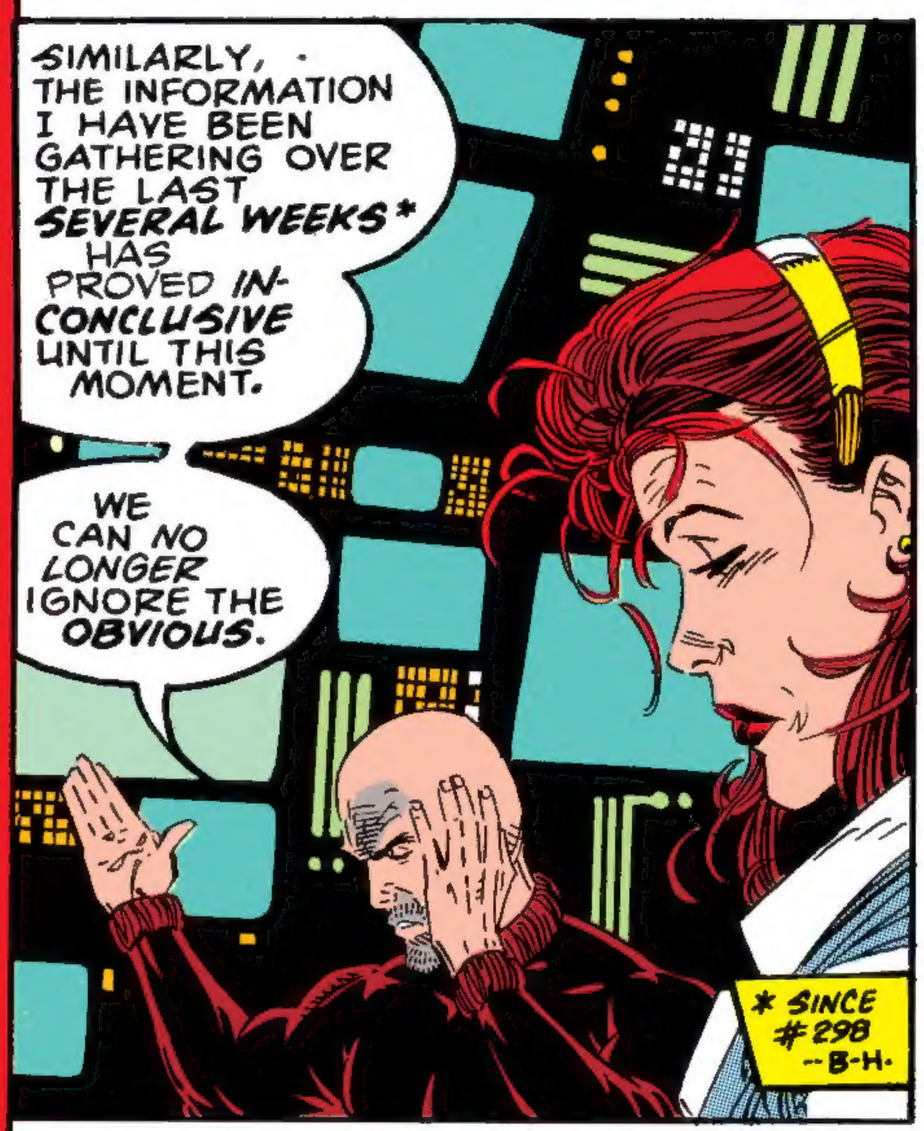
Nooo!

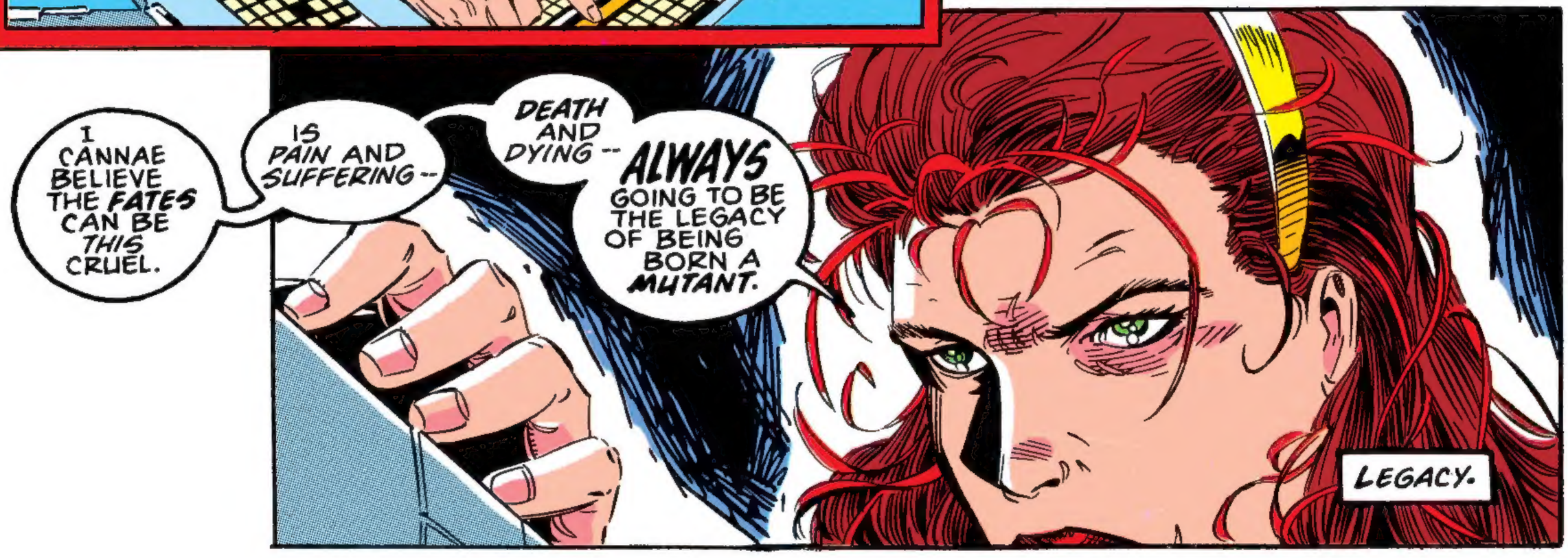
SKRASH!

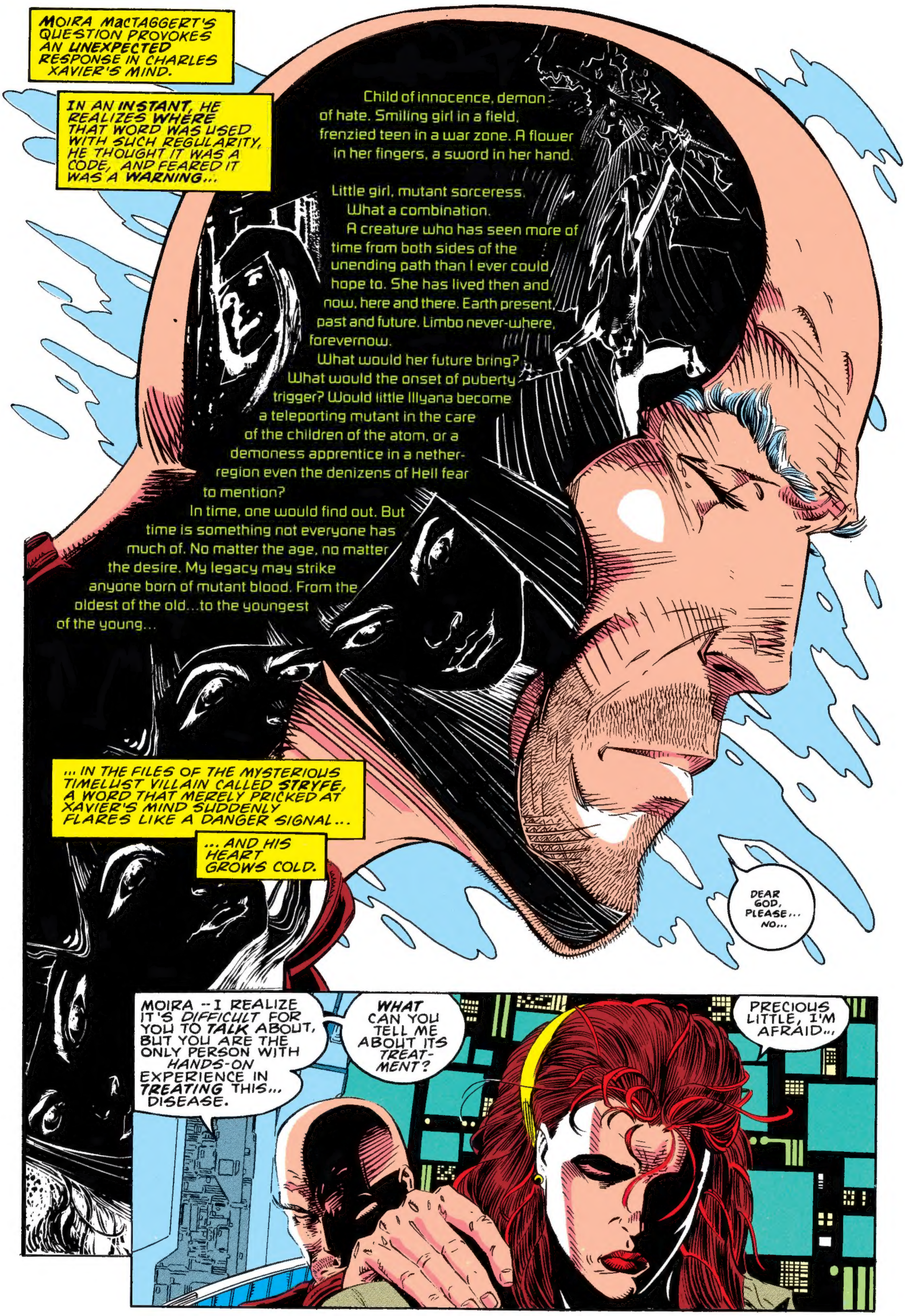

PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.
SALEM CENTER.
WESTCHESTER COUNTY.
NEW YORK.
THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THIS MANSION SERVED AS A TRAINING FACILITY FOR THE YOUNG MUTANTS KNOWN AS THE UNCANNY X-MEN.
SOMETIME BETWEEN THEN AND NOW, IT BECAME THEIR HOME.
I'LL CONFESS, CHARLES, I DIDNA KNOW THIS "READY ROOM" OF YUIR'S EVEN EXISTED. AND I POSED AS YUIR HOUSEKEEPER FOR NOT A SHORT AMOUNT O' TIME.
UNTIL RECENTLY, I DEEMED THIS ROOM OFF-LIMITS TO EVERYONE BUT MYSELF -- JUSTIFIED, I BELIEVED, BY THE OCCASIONAL NEED TO ESCAPE.
AT JUBILEE'S INSISTENCE I BECOME... AS SHE PUT IT "MORE NINETIES"... I'M TRYING TO MAKE MYSELF MORE ACCESSIBLE.
I'M IMPRESSED -- EVEN MORE SO BY THIS SHI'AR TECHNOLOGY YE HAVE AT YUIR DISPOSAL.
BY INPUTTING ALL THE PERTINENT DATA ON THE ANOMALY... WE'VE MANAGED TO PIECE TOGETHER FROM THE MEDICAL REPORTS AND EXAMS ON VICTIMS OF THIS GENETIC DISORDER --
-- WE'VE COME UP WITH AN AMALGAMATED-HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION OF AN AFFLICTED DNA HELIX.
COMPUTER: OVERLAY MUTAGENIC ANOMALY.

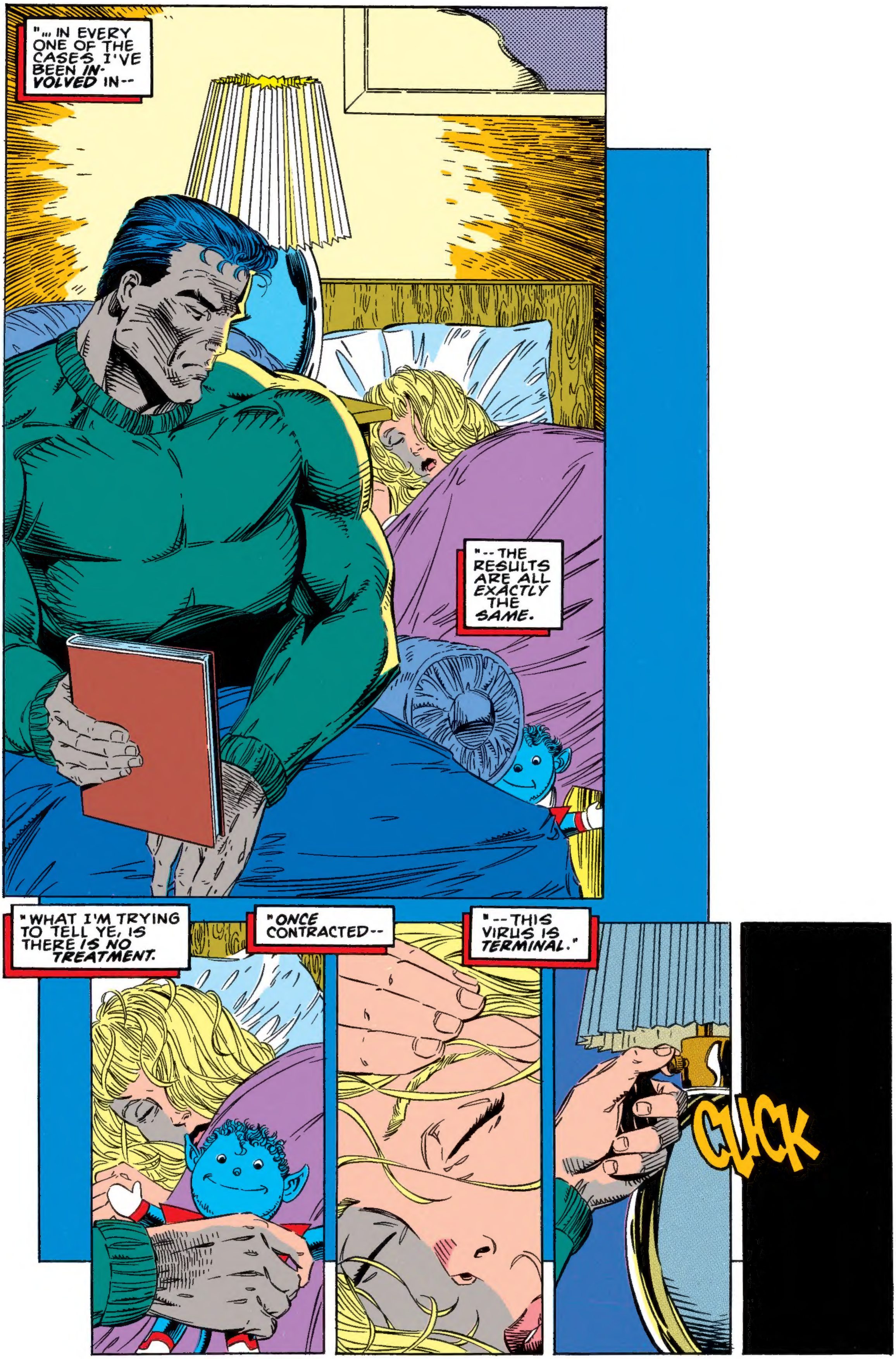

Overlay:Complete
Acch, CHARLES-- HAVE YE EVER SEEN SUCH A VILE SIGHT? THE WORST PART IS, AS NEAR AS WE CAN TELL, THE ANOMALY HAS EFFECTED EACH VICTIM'S GENES DIFFERENTLY.
AS IF THIS WEE INTRUDER IS MUTATING ITSELF WITH EACH NEW VICTIM.
NO MATTER HOW REPULSIVE THE THOUGHT, MOIRA--
--I'M AFRAID THAT YOU AND I MUST ACCEPT THE REALITY THAT SOMETHING... OR SOMEONE... HAS RELEASED A VIRUS UPON THE UNSUSPECTING MUTANT POPULACE.

WHILE I WAS IN GENOSHA, TENDING TO THE HANDFUL OF SICK AND DYING...*
... I WAS HOPING AGAINST HOPE THAT IT WAS STRICTLY A MUTATE PROBLEM CAUSED BY THEIR ACCELERATED BIOLOGIES.
* X-FACTOR #90 --B.H.


SIMILARLY, THE INFORMATION I HAVE BEEN GATHERING OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS* HAS PROVED INCONCLUSIVE UNTIL THIS MOMENT.
WE CAN NO LONGER IGNORE THE OBVIOUS.
* SINCE #298 --B.H.


I CANNAE BELIEVE THE FATES CAN BE THIS CRUEL.
IS PAIN AND SUFFERING--
DEATH AND DYING--
ALWAYS GOING TO BE THE LEGACY OF BEING BORN A MUTANT.
LEGACY.


MOIRA MacTAGGERT'S QUESTION PROVOKES AN UNEXPECTED RESPONSE IN CHARLES XAVIER'S MIND.
IN AN INSTANT, HE REALIZES WHERE THAT WORD WAS USED WITH SUCH REGULARITY, HE THOUGHT IT WAS A CODE, AND FEARED IT WAS A WARNING...
Child of innocence, demon of hate. Smiling girl in a field, frenzied teen in a war zone. A flower in her fingers, a sword in her hand.
Little girl, mutant sorceress. What a combination. A creature who has seen more of time from both sides of the unending path than I ever could hope to. She has lived then and now, here and there. Earth present, past and future. Limbo never-where, forevernow.
What would her future bring? What would the onset of puberty trigger? Would little Illyana become a teleporting mutant in the care of the children of the atom, or a demoness apprentice in a nether-region even the denizens of Hell fear to mention?
In time, one would find out. But time is something not everyone has much of. No matter the age, no matter the desire. My legacy may strike anyone born of mutant blood. From the oldest of the old...to the youngest of the young...
... IN THE FILES OF THE MYSTERIOUS TIMELUST VILLAIN CALLED STRYFE, A WORD THAT MERELY PRICKED AT XAVIER'S MIND SUDDENLY FLARES LIKE A DANGER SIGNAL...
... AND HIS HEART GROWS COLD.
DEAR GOD, PLEASE... NO...
MOIRA -- I REALIZE IT'S DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO TALK ABOUT, BUT YOU ARE THE ONLY PERSON WITH HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE IN TREATING THIS... DISEASE.
WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT ITS TREAT-MENT?
PRECIOUS LITTLE, I'M AFRAID...


"... IN EVERY ONE OF THE CASES I'VE BEEN IN-VOLVED IN--
"-- THE RESULTS ARE ALL EXACTLY THE SAME.
"WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YE, IS THERE IS NO TREATMENT.
"ONCE CONTRACTED--
"--THIS VIRUS IS TERMINAL."
CLICK